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CONTAINING

OBSERVATIONS

ON THE

LIFE AND CHARACTER

OF

JESUS CHRIST.

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INTRODUCTION.

THE matter of this number of the Monitor is principally taken from the second part of a work, entitled "*Observations on our Lord's conduct as a divine Instructor, and on the excellence of his moral character*, by William Newcombe, D. D. Bishop of Waterford." Those parts of our Saviour's life and conversation, in which he showed the virtues, that he enjoined, are attempted to be explained and illustrated. The subject will appear interesting and important to every serious and inquiring mind, and justly claims the attention of all. For Jesus Christ is presented to us as a pattern of those moral excellences, which he taught. He is described not only as our instructor, our redeemer, our judge and king, in whom dwelt the fulness of God, but a partaker of our nature; in all things tempted like us, but without sin; and an example of active and passive obedience.

He exhibited those moral qualities, which denominate a human being good and estimable; and he was a living law to the children of men. Every disposition, which he expressed, is suitable and lovely in his disciples, and they will certainly obey his commands, who imitate his life.

The Saviour might have appeared in celestial splendour, as he did at his transfiguration, when his face shone with the brightness of a mid-day sun, and his garments wore an ineffable lustre. He might have appeared, attended by myriads of angels, surrounded with awful pomp and magnificence.[a] From the clouds of heaven and the excellent glory he might have delivered his message to a trembling world;—this he might have done, had God so determined, and not have remained a day in this scene of misery and sin, encountering the temptations and calamities of our state, and terminating a course of humiliation, of labour, and suffering by the death of the cross. To the generality of mankind such an advent and departure might probably seem more worthy of the messenger of the skies, the Son of the Highest, the saviour and lawgiver of the world. By such means, they

[a] Benson's Life of Christ p. 73.

might suppose, he would best command attention and impress awe. But God's ways are not our ways, nor his thoughts our thoughts. Infinite wisdom determined that our redeemer should take on him the seed of Abraham rather than the nature of angels that he should converse with men as a brother; that as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also should partake in the same; that he should, before our eyes and in our state, as the Captain of our salvation, maintain that warfare with temptation and suffering, which his followers are called to maintain. Our merciful God would afford us a guide, whose steps we may follow through a rugged and melancholy way, amidst difficulties and dangers within and without, up to the mansions of glory and felicity, where sin and suffering, temptation, trouble, and death shall be no more forever.

On many accounts the moral character of our Saviour should be attentively regarded.

In the first place, it confirms the *evidence of christianity*. An agreement and consistency between the character and instructions of a divine teacher tends greatly to strengthen his arthority, and to establish a belief in the reality of his pretensions. Were there any

thing discordant in the doctrines and precepts of Jesus, or any contrast between them and his conduct, it might well occasion distrust. But does a plain narrative of his discourses and actions display the uniform influence of integrity, benevolence and a regard to God, we cannot doubt his sincerity. "Such a character must have been a real one. It could not have been supported throughout by the utmost stretch of human art, much less by men confessedly unlearned and obscure; by men full of prejudices and errours, from which he was free."

Secondly. The character of Christ serves to instruct us in the nature of the christian religion.

Christian religion is a divine life, a life of piety and virtue, formed by the doctrines, the precepts, and the example of the author and finisher of our faith. Now distinct ideas of the nature and essence of a practical religion cannot be communicated in a better way, than by memoirs of a perfect life. In the evangelical history of our Saviour we see in many instances, and in the general tenour of the life, religious truths influencing the thoughts, the affections, the discourses, and the actions, in the changing circumstances of human con-

dition. We behold just sentiments of God and of mankind, cherishing principles of piety and benevolence, and animating the heart, the conversation, and conduct. These instances show the nature of christian faith as an operative belief, and the connexion between the principles of christianity, and the proper temper, conversation, and behaviour that flows from them. Thus they give us a more distinct idea of moral and religious truth and duty, and of the spirit and character of a good person, than could be derived from the most exact definitions. [a]

Thirdly, we are required to acquaint ourselves with the temper and character of Christ, because he is proposed to us as the object of *imitation. Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus. He hath left us an example, that we should follow his steps.* The effects and expressions of the same principles and dispositions must vary with the state and relations of those who are called to act. *Repentance* in sinners is an evidence of respect to the authority of God's law, which he, who was free from sin, could not give. But, in all ways suitable to an innocent being, Jesus mag-

[a] See Christianity best conveyed in the historick form, by J. Simpson.

nified the law of his Father. As our Lord endeavoured to promote the salvation of men so must we; but not by all the same means. His acts as the Messiah were peculiar to that office. We are not workers of miracles, nor infallible teachers, nor discerners of the thoughts. "When it is said, that we are to imitate the life of Christ, it is not meant that we are called to the same sort of actions, but in all our behaviour to be influenced by the dispositions which influenced him. We are to be like him in heart and mind, to conduct by the *same rule*, to look toward the *same end* and to govern our lives by the *same spirit*. Christians are to do their *proper work* with those views and that temper in which Christ did his work. They have their part to act, which, though it be a different part, must not be performed with a different spirit, but with such obedience to God, such regard to his glory, for such ends of salvation, for such good of others, and with such holy dispositions as our Saviour manifested in every part of his life. A *servant* of the lowest order is in a very different state from his master; yet we may very justly exhort such a one to follow the example of a pious and charitable master; not because he can perform the

same instances, but because he may show the same *spirit* of piety and charity in the actions, proper to his condition. The different state of our Master leaves him still the exact rule and pattern of his lowest servants, who, though they cannot come up to the greatness of his actions, may yet live according to that spirit, whence they proceeded." [a]

Attending to these limitations, let us consider the reasons and motives, which should induce us to regard our Saviour as our *example*.

1. It was the design of the Father to place his Son before us as a pattern. It was a part of our Saviour's errand into the world to furnish a living representation of the virtues that become human nature. We might infer such a design in the Deity, from finding ourselves directed to imitate inferiour examples, and be followers of all who, through faith and patience, inherit the promises. We may infer it from the care he hath taken that the history of the life and conduct of Jesus should be written and transmitted, showing us how he spoke and acted in innumerable situations. The same design is proved by express declarations. "If any man will come after me, Christ tells his hearers, he must follow me." We must

[a] Low's Christian Perfection, p. 287.

learn of him to be *meek and lowly*. His disciples are enjoined to love one another, as he loved them, and when he expressed his humility and condescension by washing his disciples' feet, he said, "I have given you an example, that ye shall do as I have done unto you." "We are declared to be predestinated by God to be conformed to the image of his Son. Our christian calling is reduced to this, that we should *follow Christ's steps*. Our abiding in him, in the faith and profession of christianity, is to be proved by our walking as he walked. And we are to have him in our eyes, to *look unto Jesus* and his behaviour, in *running* the whole of the *race set before us*."

2. The example of Jesus is entirely fit to be proposed to our imitation, for various reasons. His life and actions were the life and actions of a human person, though filled with all the fullness of God. "He was tempted, like as we are." Of our pleasures and pains, desires and aversions, joys and sorrows, hopes and fears, he was a partaker without sin. He took a humble condition in life, that he might wean men from the inordinate love of the world; whilst the greatness, which he possessed as the sent of God, enabled him to be a pattern of moderation and humil-

ity to the prosperous and elevated. He mingled in the common intercourse of life, and acted his part on common occasions not less than in extraordinary emergencies. He did not affect to separate from the world and be a recluse, but appeared in the usual places of resort, conversed with the various classes of people, and went about doing good.

The example of Christ is perfect. By which we understand that it comprizes every species and the highest degree of moral excellence. By his own conduct he enforced every branch of evangelical goodness. He did no sin. Neither the strength, nor the suddenness, nor the violence of any temptation could overcome him. His example hath the authority of a rule.

3. The relations, in which our Lord stands to us, enforce the duty of imitating his moral character. He is our best friend and greatest benefactor. He hath loved us with a strong and an everlasting love. For us he lived, he suffered, and died. He practised the lowest condescension. He has conferred unspeakable blessings.

Being our Lord and master, he has required that the disciple strive to be as his master. He is represented as the model of our future happi-

ness. It is promised to his true disciples, that when he shall appear they shall be like him, for they shall see him as he is. They shall rise to that life and happiness which he possesses. Can they be partakers of his felicity hereafter, who fail to live as he lived here? Can they share his condition who bear no similitude to his character?

With sacred curiosity and an earnest desire of improvement, let us study the life of Christ, as it is recorded in the gospels; that beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, we may be changed into the same image from glory to glory, as by the spirit of the Lord.

THE following summary of the history of the New Testament, may be a proper introduction to the description of the character of our Lord.

Jesus, called the Christ, having been conceived, by the power of the Holy Ghost, in the womb of a virgin named Mary, espoused to a mean person, whose name was Joseph, of the family of David, was born at Bethlehem in Judea, in the reign of Herod king of the Jews, at a time when there was a taxing or enrolment ordered in that country by a decree of Augustus the Roman emperour. Matt. i. Luke i. ii.

The birth of Jesus was attended and followed with some events of an extraordinary nature, Matth. ii. After eight days he was circumcised, and then presented at the temple, according to the custom of the law of Moses. And his birth, as king of the Jews, having been notified at Jerusalem, by the arrival of some wise men of the east who had seen his star in their own country, and come to Jerusalem to worship him; Herod formed a design against the life of the young child. But he was preserved by flight into Egypt, whither he was carried by Joseph, together with his mother Mary, by divine order; and after a short space of time was brought back again by Joseph, who then went and settled at Nazareth. There is little more related of the early part of his life, except that at the age of twelve years he went up to Jerusalem at the feast of the passover; where he gave some proofs of uncommon knowledge; and returned thence to Nazareth, and was subject to his parents. Luke ii. 41.

In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Cæsar, then emperour of Rome, Pontius Pilate being governour of Judea, and Herod tetrarch of Galilee, John called the baptist, son

of Zacharias, one of the race of Jewish priests, and of his wife Elizabeth, (who was born a few months before Jesus, in the reign of the fore-mentioned Herod, king of the Jews,) appeared in the country beyond Jordan, preaching the *baptism of repentance for the remission of sins.* And great numbers of men from all parts of Judea resorted to him, and were baptized, *confessing their sins.* He taught that the kingdom of God was at hand, bid men bring forth fruits meet for repentance, and not to depend on any national privileges, or external performances for acceptance with God. *The people were then in expectation; and all men mused in their hearts, whether he were the Christ or not.* And when the Jews *sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him who he was, he confessed he was not the Christ;* at the same time openly declaring, that there was then among them a great person, whom as yet they knew not: and though he came after him, he was so far preferred before him, that he was not worthy to *unloose the latchet of his shoes.* And whereas he baptized them with water unto repentance, this great person would baptize them with the Holy Ghost and with fire. Luke ii. iii. Matth. iii. Mark i. John i.

When a great part of the people had been baptized, Jesus also came to John, and was baptized of him in Jordan. Matth. iii. 13. And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straitway out of the water: and lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting upon him. And, lo, a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased. At which time Jesus was about thirty years of age. Luke iii. 23.

To his baptism succeeded his temptation, Matth. iv. Luke iv. The temptation being ended, he *returned in the power of the spirit to Galilee* and wrought miracles, and began to gather disciples, who "seeing his glory believed on him." At which time John, still baptizing, bore testimony to him, that he was the person of whom he had spoken, and that he must increase.

Jesus soon began to preach more publickly, and having chosen out of the number of his disciples twelve to be generally with him, that they might be afterwards the witnesses to the world of his life, his doctrines, his miracles and resurrection, he went about the several parts of Judea, resorting likewise to Jerusalem at the time of the great feasts of the Jewish nation.

He taught men concerning their duty to God and to each other; the end of their being and a future existence. He assured them that they who believed in God and in him whom God had sent, and obeyed the commandments delivered by him, should enjoy eternal life and he would "raise them up at the last day." John vi. 39. That God had given all authority and judgment to him, and that he would come again and render to all according to their works.

"As he went about teaching, he wrought many miracles, as evidences that the Father had sent him, and to confirm the truth of all his words. He turned water into wine; fed, with a few loaves and fishes, great multitudes in desert places; walked on the sea; calmed the winds and the waves; gave sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, speech to the dumb, soundness and strength to the lame, and those that were bowed down; healed diseases of all sorts; restored to their right minds lunaticks and demoniacks, and raised the dead. These miracles were performed at his word, in an instant; and some were wrought on persons at a distance from him. They were done by him in the most publick and open manner; at Jerusalem, and in every part of Judea and Gal-

ilee ; in cities, in villages, in synagogues, in private houses, in the streets, and the high ways, in the presence of enemies, before scribes and pharisees, and rulers of synagogues, who attended by multitudes ; in a word, before men of all characters."

In the course of his ministry likewise, signal divine testimonies were given to him. Besides voices from heaven at different times, he was gloriously transfigured in the presence of three of his disciples, Matth. xvii. 1—8. In proof of his divine authority, he referred men to the witness of John, the miracles he had wrought, and these testimonies from heaven. Besides his wonderful works, he manifested a clear knowledge of the thoughts and designs of men, and foretold many events, which afterwards came to pass.

The twelve disciples and the seventy whom he sent forth for a time, were able to control and suspend the laws of nature. Matth. x. 1. Mark iii. 15. Luke ix. 1. x. 1.

While God thus glorified him, he lived in a humble condition, and was an example of every virtue becoming his character as the Messiah, or tending to exalt human nature, or bless mankind.

Being apprehended by the Jews, he was finally, through the clamour of the multitude, and against the conscience of the judge, condemned to be crucified, and accordingly died on the cross at Jerusalem, amidst many testimonies given by God to his innocence and dignity. On the third day after his crucifixion and burial, early in the morning, Jesus arose and shewed himself to his apostles and others, who were well acquainted with him. He was seen of them several times for the space "of forty days," and finally, having renewed to them the promise of the Holy Ghost, he led them out to Bethany, and while "they beheld," he was taken up, and a cloud received him out of their sight. Matth. xxviii. Mark xvi. &c.

Besides these and many more particulars concerning Jesus Christ, the New-Testament contains the history of the apostles of the Lord, their companions, and fellow-labourers; who succeeded, according to his prediction, to lay the foundation of the christian church in the world. [a]

[a] Lardner's Works, Vol. II. Life.

N. B. *In the following sections, the figures refer to notes at the end, the letters refer to the margin.*

SECTION I.

Piety of our Saviour.

In representing the moral character of our Lord, we naturally give the chief place to his piety. Piety is the first and supreme obligation incumbent on mankind and on all intelligent and moral creatures. The whole of religion is to be considered as the service of God. It is the leading purpose of the divine dispensations to bring our thoughts, affections, and habits under the prevailing influence of piety. To show us the Father, and engage us to worship him in spirit and in truth, were the principal ends of the mission and work of Christ.

Having considered what our Lord teaches of God the Father, let us attend to instances and expressions of piety, in his life and conduct. In this respect he was not like the Jewish teachers who said and did not. He was a perfect pattern of perfect instructions.

Our Lord represents the Deity as adorable and amiable in the highest degree. He is the most High, and Lord of heaven and earth; heaven is his throne, and earth his footstool; he is the one Jehovah, and the only true God; he is a spirit, whom no man hath seen at any time; he hath life in himself; he seeth in secret, he knoweth the heart, and with him all things are possible.

He arrayeth the herb of the field in more than regal glory; he feedeth the fowls of the air; and without him not a sparrow falleth to the ground. Much more does his providence extend to man: yea, the very hairs of our head are all numbered; and when he vouchsafes protection, not one of them shall perish.

There is none good but God; who "so loved the world as to give his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." He is also righteous, holy, kind to the unthankful and evil, perfect in mercy, forgiving to the merciful, and inexorable to those who withhold pardon and compassion. He loveth those, who observe our Lord's precepts: he adopteth the peacemakers for his sons: he abhorreth the lofty and ostentatious appearance, which men admire: he avengeth his faithful servants on their persecutors: it is not his will that any should perish: the pure in heart shall hereafter see him, and of him shall the good be [a] eternally blessed, and the wicked eternally punished.

But the image which perpetually occurs throughout the gospel, and under which our Saviour delights to mention God, is that of our heavenly Father; who "maketh the sun to rise

[a] Matthew 25, 34, 46.

on the evil and on the good, sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust," and is "kind to the unthankful and evil;" who compassionates and embraces the returning sinner with the bowels of a most affectionate father; nay, who is actuated by a stronger principle than natural affection: for "if we, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto our children; how much more shall our Father, who is in heaven, give good things to them that ask him?"

Such is the God, whom we should fear, because he is able to destroy both soul and body in hell; whom we should obey after the manner of the angels in heaven; from whom we should seek our reward; to whose will we should wholly resign ourselves; and who is the sole object of our worship, service, and prayer; and the highest and best object of our imitation and love.

Of the duty, which we owe to that Being whose character and relations are thus represented, the author and finisher of our faith was a shining example. He taught piety by his practice as well as precepts and declarations. That consecration of the affections and actions to God, which he required, he exhibited; that worship and service of the supreme Being, which he explained and inculcated in his discourses, he farther illustrated and recommended by his own bright and persuasive example.

We discern in our Lord the expressions of a piety at once sublime and fervent, rational and sedate; distant alike from cold formality and unnatural and extravagant raptures and transports. As it appears in the language and behaviour of Jesus Christ, piety does not consist in mechanical impulses and variable fervours of devotion; in superstitious austerities and enthusiastical visions; but it consists in worshipping the Father of the universe in spirit and in truth, with an enlightened understanding, and a serene and purified conscience. The fruits of it are zeal regulated by knowledge, and tempered with humanity and compassion; the practice of virtue in all its branches; humility, contentment, sobriety, the love of mankind, and a delight in doing good. The pious man is not reserved and unsociable; but maintains a friendly intercourse with his fellow men, as circumstances permit or require. When our Saviour spent the night in prayer, he had spent the day in feeding and teaching the people. In proportion as we entertain a devout regard to God, and enter into the spirit of our religious duty, we aim to promote the glory of the infinite Creator by the moral rectitude, the present and eternal happiness of his intelligent creatures.

There is not any conceivable way of testifying a pious frame of mind, which may not be

found in our Lord's conduct. He constantly gave the strongest proofs of his deep and awful sense of God's perfections. His Father was the object of his supreme love and unlimited confidence. A spirit of obedience and submission to the Deity was expressed by Jesus Christ on all occasions. He was an exemplary worshipper of God in private and publick; and paid due respect to sacred times, things and places.

The first words attributed to our Lord in the gospels contain a pious sentiment. When he was no more than [b] twelve years of age, having accompanied his parents to the passover, he remained behind them in Jerusalem, penetrated with the love of God's worship, and of religious wisdom, and was found in the temple, hearing the teachers of the law, and asking them questions. When his mother said, "Behold thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing;" his reply was, "How is it that ye sought me? Knew ye not that I must needs be [found] in my father's house?" that the temple dedicated to my Father was naturally and necessarily the place of my resort?

A regard to God is a vital principle which should run through all our conduct, to inform, to model, and direct it. We must consider

b Luke ii. 41.

him in every thing, and serve him in every thing. We are required not merely to approach the supreme Being in acts of immediate devotion, but to make the several parts of ordinary life parts of his service. Such an habitual *devoutness* of mind was manifested by our Saviour. We may observe him referring every circumstance respecting himself to his Father, his mission, his doctrine, his mighty works, all his actions, his sufferings, his resurrection. It was the whole bent of his mind, his labour, and delight, "his meat and drink to do the will of him that sent him." God was in all his thoughts. When he thus exhorted his disciples, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works," what does he subjoin? not, "and honour yourselves or your teacher;" but he shows his predominant idea by adding, "and glorify your Father, who is in heaven." In his familiar conversations with his disciples, it was his custom to intermingle pious and devotional sentiments. He made use of common incidents and objects for suggesting religious lessons and admonitions. When the beauties and operations of nature are mentioned, they are referred by him to the author of nature.[a]

All his words and actions, the minutest steps of his life, afforded exemplary proofs of that hab-

[a] Matthew vi, 26, 28.

itual and lively devotion, which calls into act our inward love and veneration for the Deity.

To *love* God with all the heart, and soul, and mind, and strength, is the first and great commandment. In Jesus Christ, the love of his Father was a sincere, ardent, prevailing, and constant affection. It prompted him to do [c] always those things, which were pleasing to the Father, and obey [d] his will even to the death of the cross. It was manifested by his imitation of his Father; and by zeal for his honour; as well as by obedience and service.

The moral character of God is proposed to us as the object of *imitation*. We are commanded to be merciful as he is merciful, holy as he is holy; and to be followers of him, as dear children. The holiness of the Deity is the standard, upon which all intelligent beings should, according to their capacities, aim to be formed. Our blessed Saviour loved righteousness and hated iniquity; therefore he set before him the brightest pattern and wrote after the fairest copy. He cites the example of God as the rule and motive of his own conduct. "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work," or, "As my Father is continually working, I also work." "God is constantly exerting his power and goodness in

c John viii. 29. d John xiv. 31.

the preservation and government of the world, and the supply of the wants of his creatures. In imitation of this heavenly benefactor, I daily employ myself in acts of beneficence, I am not weary of doing good." So completely did our Lord represent the moral excellencies of God, that he is deservedly called "the brightness of the Father's glory and express image of his person." Would any know what God is, in order to follow him,...Christ is the "image of the invisible God," and affirms [a] "he that hath seen me hath seen the Father."

Christ testified his love of God by his regard to his *honour* and *glory*. He sought not his own glory; but the glory of him that sent him. He submitted to all the labours and sufferings of his ministry, in order that the kingdom of God might come, his laws be obeyed, and his name announced and honoured to the ends of the earth. Animated by zeal for the honour of God, he vindicated the temple from desecration; and with awful severity reproved and admonished the scribes and pharisees, when they blasphemed the Holy Spirit. Because he had kept this end constantly in view, he appeals to his Father at the close of his work, "I have glorified thee on the earth; I have finished the work, which thou gavest me to do."

[a] John xiv. 9.

Confidence in God is an exercise of piety, supported by a persuasion of his power and faithfulness. Through a series of afflictions and dangers, our Lord maintained an unshaken trust in the care and goodness of God. When his last sufferings were near, and he foresaw the desertion of his disciples, he sustained himself with the thought of his Father's presence..." Ye shall be scattered every one to his own, and shall leave me alone, and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me." When he hung upon the cross, he was confident, that he should be that day in paradise; and immediately before he expired, he addressed God with a loud voice: "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit."

Resignation to the will of God, as it is expressed in the dispensations of his providence, is an essential part of piety. Resignation is manifested by composure amidst the troubles of the world, and by acquiescence in the uncertainty of its hopes; by contentment and self possession under trials and disappointments, and by fortitude in dangers. Resignation is consistent with grief and fear, proportioned to the evil, which we suffer or apprehend. But we are not allowed to murmur, or repine; to accuse the administration of heaven, or distrust its wisdom and benevolence; however severe may be our afflictions, however gloomy our prospects.

Our Lord was an example of profound submission to the will of God, throughout a series of most heavy trials. "Not as I will," said he, "but as thou wilt," addressing his Father on the approach of his last sufferings. (1)In this instance, the Saviour appears to have had a will or a desire, different from the will of God. To show the consistency of this frame of mind with a resigned temper, we must observe, that our Lord was made like unto us in all things, sin excepted, and that, upon this and other occasions, he experienced in himself what we also frequently find within us, two contrary wills, or to speak more accurately, a strife between inclination and reason, in which cases, though reason gets the better of inclination, we may be said to do a thing willingly, though with an unwilling mind. Thus a good man, placed in such circumstances that he must undergo great hardships, or act against his duty, is desirous, as he is a man, not to suffer pain, for human nature shuns and dislikes it; but he is more desirous of doing his duty; and when he is resolved to choose what is right, and for the sake of it, to submit to what offends and crosses his natural inclinations, he may say with our Lord, "Not my will, but the will of God be done."[b]

(b) See Christ's prediction of Peter's death, John xxi. 18.

We will consider in several instances how our Lord exercised the virtue of resignation here on earth. Christ pleased not himself, says Paul; he did not consult his ease, security, and indulgence, nor for the sake of them neglect any part of his office. He came, as he tells us, not to do his own will, but the will of his Father. By the wise appointment of God, he was, through the course of his life and ministry, placed under a variety of heavy trials; subjected to many inconveniences from which men desire to be free, and deprived of many good things, which they desire to possess, that so he might practise in its full extent, the duty of acquiescence in the divine will.

Let us take a view of some of the many evils and the manner in which he endured them.

We all desire to enjoy the conveniences of life, and to be above dependence. They who do not aspire after great riches are started at the thought of extreme poverty. To such poverty our Saviour submitted. He was born and educated in a family, which, however noble in descent, was low in circumstances; he had no house of his own, where he could lay his head; nor money with which to pay a small tribute, and he was glad to be assisted from the substance of the liberal.

The purposes of his mission required that, "while rich, for our sakes he should become poor, that we, through his poverty, might be rich." Yet, though in the history of our Lord, we find many proofs and instances of his poverty, we do not find that he ever uttered any complaints of this circumstance, or expressed a dislike of such a state. On the contrary, he speaks favourably of the condition of the poor; recommends it to those, whose lot it is, as a state exposed to fewer temptations and dangers than that of the prosperous, and which patiently undergone shall turn to their advantage in the next life.

We would avoid hard and fatiguing labour, even when we are willing to be active. Hunger and thirst, when long endured, are enemies to our nature. The accounts of our Saviour's life during his ministry represent it as a life of fatigue and hardship. He was constantly taking journies on foot, discoursing whole days to the people, and often at night, when others were at rest, retiring to bleak mountains and deserts, to spend those hours in meditation and prayer, and the next day renewing his accustomed toils. Our Lord often suffered hunger and thirst; oftener, in all probability, than the evangelists have mentioned; as he was frequently busy, and

sometimes in places where no refreshment was to be had; nor do we read that he ever wrought a miracle to feed himself. These things Jesus underwent, not only without any impatience and repining, but willingly and readily; never, out of regard to his ease, refusing to go where he was requested, and could do good; never, to avoid the inconvenience of company, or to consult his repose, dismissing and disappointing the multitude, who gathered to hear the word of God. If the disciples showed any dislike when the people pressed into his presence, he rebuked them for their froward and impatient behaviour.

The necessary wish of an instructer is to have teachable and ready pupils. But our Lord, for wise reasons, chose for his disciples, uneducated men, who, however honest and well-disposed, were, through ignorance, apt to mistake him. With these persons he spent the largest part of his time. He instructed them with the greatest patience; and never said any thing more severe than is implied in such inquiries as the following: Are ye also without understanding? how is it that ye do not perceive?

Returns of baseness and treachery from our intimates, whom we have served, will wring complaints from the mildest and most gentle. It is not an enemy, the injured person exclaims,

that hath done me this unkindness, for then I could have borne it: but it was even thou, my companion, my guide, and mine own familiar friend. Warnings could not recall nor generosity soften the traitor Judas. When our Lord gave him up as lost, it was without reproaches: he said only, "what thou doest, do quickly." When he was by this man delivered to the Jews, his reproof was, Companion, wherefore art thou come? Betrayest thou the son of man with a kiss?

A good man, whose office it is to instruct others, will be grieved when his charitable labours are lost, and those whom he addresses prove stubborn. During our Saviour's ministry, how small was his success! How was he set at nought by an unbelieving generation? Though this deeply affected him, as we perceive by the complaints which he uttered, and the just anger which he expressed on some occasions, he was yet resigned, and continued his endeavours to win men to faith and obedience.

To be injured in our reputation, and be the objects of malicious calumny, is a great trial of human patience. Never was any one more defamed and slandered than our Saviour. Yet he was ready to relieve, to instruct, and to pardon his calumniators.

To see multitudes, and especially our own countrymen, involved in great calamity, and this through their own fault, is a great affliction to a benevolent man. This affliction our Lord was called to endure. Witness his passionate lamentation over the unhappy city Jerusalem; and his frequent expressions of concern, at the days of vengeance which were coming upon his country. Under this painful trial he needed and exercised the spirit of resignation.

Future evils, when we see them coming, and are sure that we cannot escape them, become present sufferings. Jesus foresaw all the horrours which awaited him, and was cast down at the prospect. As his death drew near, he said, "[a] now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but I came on purpose for this hour." On the evening before his passion, he was troubled in spirit, and testified, and said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me." Afterwards he began to be sorrowful and very heavy, and said, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here and watch with me." In all this hard conflict, which he endured within himself, this extreme dejection, this fear, anguish, and consternation, no impatient word fell from his mouth; nothing

[a] John xii. 27.

that did not express a perfect submission to the will of God.

Death in any form is usually unacceptable. A death attended with torture and infamy is terrible indeed. Distressing and ignominious as the death of Jesus was, he met it with humble resignation to the will of God, yet not without that dislike, those fears, that concern and dejection, to which natural infirmity makes the best of persons liable.

"Would we learn to act as we ought under the evils, that may probably some time or other overtake us? We need no other books besides the New-Testament, and no other example than our Saviour's to instruct us. His sufferings and his conduct under them supply one of the most agreeable and most useful meditations that can occupy our minds, especially if we ourselves are in any of the same hard circumstances. To reflect upon the majestick and splendid parts of his life and character affords not the same relief to a dejected mind. To view him commanding all nature, saying to the sea and to the winds, Peace, be still, and to the dead, Come forth; to view him striking to the ground those who came to take him, by only saying, I am he, and rising triumphant from the grave, and ascending in the clouds to heaven; to view him thus, will

excite our reverence, and confirm our belief in him; but there is nothing in all this that we can imitate and apply to ourselves. It is peculiarly instructive and pleasing, to view him where he appears as one of us; as much distressed and as little regarded as one of us can be; to consider him possessing nothing, and attended with a few friends, almost as poor as himself; enduring hunger, thirst, cold, and weariness; slandered and reviled, despised and betrayed, scourged and crucified; to consider him, bearing affliction, not with stoical scorn and unconcern, as though he neither felt pain, nor was sensible of injuries; but deeply affected with fear and horrour, with sorrow and despondency; bending to the earth under the heavy hand of God, offering up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears; and almost asking what, as he well knew, was not to be obtained; to see him thus compassed about, as with afflictions, so also with human infirmities; to see him in all these trials, persisting in an uniform obedience to God; exercising the utmost charity and long suffering towards men, towards his enemies and persecutors, encountering evils, most disagreeable to human nature, with patience and silent meekness, without repining and without murmuring."

We have considered some instances in which the piety of our Lord appeared ; in the following section we shall view him in his ready obedience to his Father's will, and particularly, in his exemplary worship of God, his attention to positive duties, and his treatment of places, times, and objects, having a relation to the service of the supreme Being. May we approve and imitate the bright example which is set before us. Our Lord and Master was careful to form and express right and worthy apprehensions of the Deity. Let us endeavour to view him in his true character. May we acknowledge God in all our ways. May we desire to please, fear to offend, and labour to resemble him ; and at all times, in all circumstances, be able to say with sincerity, Not our will, but thine, O God, be done !

SECT. II.

The Piety of our Saviour.

God is the supreme legislator and governor of the moral world. On his perfect wisdom, his almighty power, and unchangeable goodness is founded his sovereign authority over moral agents. We testify our love, our trust, and other devout affections, not merely by resignation to his providence, but by obedience to his commands.

Our Lord was an example of unreserved, impartial, and universal *obedience* to the laws of God. This obedience was the necessary effect and expression of his piety. To do the will of God was his meat and drink; his business and delight; the sole object of his ambition; the purpose for which he lived and for which he died.

All the moral excellencies of our Lord's character, and all the good actions of his life were parts of his religious obedience. We shall consider it more particularly as expressed in his observance of the worship of God, publick and private, and his attention to positive duties. [a] It was his *custom*, says Luke, to go into the synagogue on the sabbath day. "His attendance on the services of the synagogue and the sabbath

a Luke iv. 16.

was not merely accidental or occasional, but habitual and stated. What we do according to no fixed rule, we do feebly and confusedly; what we do seldom, we do with reluctance and dislike, and from dislike the natural transition is to total omission. On the contrary, what is subjected to rule is done accurately and efficiently; what we do habitually, we do with ease and delight. The Saviour vouchsafed to become an example here also, as of every thing else that is wise and good. He was a pattern of regular, orderly conduct, from his childhood and upward. He was a silent instructor of the successive stages of rising existence in docility, in contentment, in submission, in regularity."

Without doubt Jesus went up to Jerusalem three times a year, according to the divine appointment, there to celebrate the three great festivals. His attending the synagogue worship and the feast of dedication [a] may be considered as acts implying a deference to human authority in religious matters; when wisely exercised in the modification of divine ordinances, or in new appointments consistent with the divine law, and the rights of conscience, and having a manifest tendency to promote piety and virtue. For though [b] Moses required a diligent teaching of

a John x. 22. b Deut. vi. 7.

the law, yet he did not enjoin a publick reading and explanation of it on the sabbath. Christians indeed have [c] apostolical authority for reading the scriptures in their religious assemblies; and our Lord's example enforces a compliance with other usages, which are orderly and edifying in the church, such as the instruction of christian congregations by the minister. The other instance appears to justify new institutions, made for manifest good causes. It was Judas's [d] dedication of the temple, after it had been profaned by the command of Antiochus, which gave rise to an additional solemn assembly, besides the three which Moses commanded; like our present appointment of certain sacred seasons, besides the day on which we are taught to commemorate our Lord's resurrection. We have no reason to think that it is forbidden to the christian church to make free will offerings, and set apart other days, besides the Lord's day, for the solemn worship of God. It cannot be improper for a community to observe annually a day of publick thanksgiving and praise, and another of publick humiliation and prayer; and it is becoming in particular societies to present themselves in a solemn manner before God, as the aspects of his providence to them may sug-

c Col. iv. 16. d Macc. iv. 59.

gest. But it is certain, that the reason of things and the order and welfare of society require, that the liberty of appointing special seasons for religious exercises should be used sparingly, discreetly and cautiously. The ill effects of the supersitious multiplication of fasts and holidays have been very evident in some christian countries. They have proved injurious to the business of life, and been a source of idleness and dissipation. Instead of days of piety, they are frequently days of sloth and amusement. The pretence of devotion is a poor excuse for neglecting our worldly calling and the care of our families. Though Pharaoh's remark to the Israelites did not apply, it may be used in some instances with strict propriety, "Ye are idle, ye are idle; therefore ye say, let us go and do sacrifice to the Lord."

The principle which regulated the conduct of our Lord in respect to the feast of dedication, was inculcated by him, when he received John's Baptism, in honour of that prophet and of a rite which he himself designed to institute, and also that he might set a decent example by a [a] solemn initiation into his mistery; "Thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness." "Conformity in things innocent and lawful is a duy imposed

a Ablution was used under the law, when the priests and Levites were set apart to their office. See Ex. xxix. 4. xl. 12. Lev. viii. 6. Numb. viii. 7.

by decency, kindness and regard to peace; dissent, merely for the sake of dissent, is a mixture of pride and bigotry. The question is not what we *may* do; but what it *becomes* us to do. Things "lovely and of good report," things "expedient" must be thought of, together with things "true, honest, just and pure." Our Saviour would put respect on every institution, ceremonial as well as moral, that had the sanction either of divine authority, or of general use, or of obvious utility."

But whilst our Lord gave the countenance of his example to proper and instituted forms and rites of religion, he ever insisted on the subordinate value of positive duties. He aimed to lead his hearers to just sentiments and behaviour on this point by a repeated reference to God's declaration in Hosea, [a] "I will have mercy and not sacrifice."

To resist the disposition of men to approach the Deity with numerous and expensive forms, beyond what the purposes of a rational service of him require; to discountenance the propensity to worship with the eye without the heart, with the show without the spirit of devotion; he bore testimony against the human doctrines and unprescribed usages, which the superstition and hypocrisy of the Jews had blended

[a] Matth. ix. 13. xii. 7.

with the law and the worship of God. These our Lord carefully separated, though with extreme danger to himself; teaching, and exemplifying in his conduct, that "it was lawful to do good on the sabbath," omitting and reproving [b] Pharisaical ablutions; condemning religious [c] vows inconsistent with natural duties solemnly enjoined by God himself; confuting idle distinctions of [d] oaths; and cautioning his disciples and the multitude against that [e] external parade of religion; and those ostentatious almsgivings, fastings and prayers, which distinguished the leading and most powerful sect of his times.

We have attended to proofs and instances of our Lord's regard to sacred *institutions*, *places*, and *seasons*; whatever related to the social *worship* of God.

The same disposition of our Saviour further appeared in his zeal for the sanctity of the temple, and the course he pursued to rescue it from profanation. At the first passover, which he celebrated during his ministry, he found in the third or outward court of the temple, called the court of the Gentiles, sellers of oxen, sheep, and doves for sacrifices; and persons who, for gain, exchanged the foreign coin into the half shekles, which by the [f] law, was annually paid into the

b Mark vii. 2, 8. c Ib. 10—13. d Matt. xxiii. 16—19. e Ib. 5. vi. 1, 5, 16. f Ex. xxx. 15.

sacred treasury. [a] "And when he had made a scourge of cords," which had been used in tying the cattle; or of rushes, found on the spot, "he cast all out of the temple, and the sheep and oxen; and poured out the changers' money, and overthrew the tables:" and commanded those who sold doves to remove the enclosures which contained them, saying to them with indignation, "take these things hence; make not my Father's house an house of merchandise." The vile abuse being continued, the act of reformation was [b] repeated, with greater strictness, as our Lord "would not suffer any to carry a vessel through the temple;" with a more direct intimation of his regard to the Gentiles, as he said, "My house shall be called the house of prayer to all the Gentiles;" and with more indignant language, as he now added to his former reproofs these severe words, "but ye have made it a den of thieves."

(3) This transaction affords a new and singular exhibition of the spirit and temper of Jesus Christ. No personal injury or insult could provoke an expression of resentment. He "gave his back to the smiters, and his cheeks to them that plucked off the hair, he hid not his face from shame and spitting." He was distinguished by

[a] John ii. 15, &c. [b] Matt. xi. 16. Matt. xxi. 13.

patience, meekness, and gentleness. Nevertheless these gracious qualities have a boundary. There are occasions on which the exercise of them would cease to be virtuous, and where a man would "do well to be angry." Wanton, deliberate profanation of things sacred, of the name or the house of God, is one of those occasions which justify great indignation and severity.

If any ask respecting the history of Christ's purifying the temple, why the effect so much exceeded the natural means in the expulsion of such numbers; the answer is, that it may be ascribed partly to the co-operation of God, partly to a consciousness that by such practices the temple was profaned, and partly to the authority which accompanied our Lord's words and actions. For even at the first passover his authority was greatly strengthened by the testimony of John the baptist; by the miraculous attestations at his baptism, by his reputation among the Galileans, to whom he had "manifested forth his glory," and probably by miracles previously wrought at that very festival. At the last passover, he was the object of particular attention. Having now no further measures to observe with respect to the Jewish rulers, he assumed more authority and more outward marks of dignity than he had done before. The fear of the people, who attended Jesus

every where, and were disposed to support him in whatever he should undertake, might also discourage those who had the power of the state, from opposing him in the act of cleansing the temple.

If the reasons of our Lord's conduct, in this particular, are sought, the following may be assigned. Knowing that he should be accused as a violator of the law and a blasphemer, he thus reproved the profane indifference, hypocrisy, and avarice of the Jewish rulers; for it is highly probable, that they, who cavilled at his miracles on the sabbath, and wondered at his eating with unwashen hands, not only calmly beheld this abuse of the temple, but made it an occasion of gain; he publickly assumed the character of a prophet and of the Son of God in an eminent sense; for the Jews perceived that this was a prophetick act, as appears by their question, [a] What sign showest thou unto us, since thou doest these things? And by calling God his Father, he gave a strong intimation of his Messiahship. He vindicated the court of the Gentiles from profanation, and signified his further favour towards them: and, which the history particularly points out, he asserted the sacredness of the temple...his zeal for God's house [b] con-

a John ii. 18. b Psalm lxix. 4.

sumed him, and was in his breast as a devouring fire bursting forth irresistibly.

In this proceeding, however, it has been remarked, that our Lord took upon him, as a private man, the office of inflicting punishment in the cause of God, which is also the cause of all who revere God. It is agreed that, whether he acted in this character, or in that of a prophet or the Messiah, he was in this instance an example of true zeal for the reformation of abuses in religious worship, and for the sanctity of *places* dedicated to God. But let frail and erring man be cautious when he proposes to himself the purifier of the temple as a pattern of zeal. There is a zeal for trifles, and a zeal, the offspring of prejudice and habit. There is an interested, a vain, an intolerant, a malignant, and cruel zeal, and a blind and precipitate zeal. When Paul was exceeding mad against the followers of Christ; when the disciples James and John asked their master to call down fire from heaven to consume the Samaritans, who refused to receive him... when the disciples of Christ were the victims of that exterminating zeal which he predicted would be kindled against them, saying, "They shall put you out of the synagogues; yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he

doeth God service;" when the christian world was set into a flame by the dispute about the time of observing a festival; when they hereticated and destroyed each other to determine the posture in which the sacrament should be received, or the habit to be worn by the priest in reading the service of the church; there was zeal indeed, and upon a religious pretence; but not such as instigated Christ to purify the temple, or such as his precepts or example recommend: there was apparent piety, but real pride, avarice, ambition, anger, envy, or selfishness. Christian zeal is according to knowledge. It aims at the glory of God and the good of mankind. It is proportioned in its degree to the importance of objects, and confines itself to lawful means. Those who have it are more distinguished by the mild and gentle, than the wrathful and violent affections. It is daring and fearless indeed: but not bitter, malevolent, unmerciful. Where the intentions are pure, prudence must be joined to zeal in those who would reform abuses. The result of vehement and unseasonable attempts to correct and improve has sometimes been to injure, and even subvert religious worship. "The effect of the actions of all those who follow this precedent of our Sa-

viour in the tract of the letter," says bishop Taylor, "has not been emendation. For indeed there have been some reformations, which have been so like this, that the greatest alteration that hath been made was, that they carried all things out of the temple; the money, and the tables, and the sacrifice; and the temple itself went at last."

We may remark with what a warmth of zeal our Lord reproved and admonished the scribes and pharisees, when they blasphemed [a] the Holy Spirit, and ascribed the miracles wrought by Christ to a diabolical influence. Thus did he fulfil the words of the psalmist, [b] "The reproaches of them that reproached thee are fallen upon me." He felt, reprehended, and refuted them: nay, they affected him much more deeply and intimately, than if he had been their object; and he declared that they had a more heinous and even an inexpiable guilt.

The regard which Jesus entertained for *sacred things* was also evinced by expressions of the highest honour for God's word. He read and explained it in the [c] synagogue; he repeatedly [d] argued from it, and once with this declaration, [e] "The scripture cannot be broken." He exhorted the Jews to search the scriptures; he introduced

a Matth. xii. 33—39. xi. 39—52. b Ps. lxix. 9. c Luke iv. 16, 21.
d Matth. xxi. 42. xxii. 29. e John x. 35.

Abraham as prophetically observing that those, who heard not Moses and the prophets, would not be persuaded even if one rose from the dead; he interpreted throughout all the scriptures [a] the things concerning himself; he twice affirmed in the most emphatical terms, that not one jot or tittle of the law should pass away [b]; he so disposed events that he was crucified on the paschal feast, breathed out his soul at the hour of [c] evening sacrifice, rested in the grave on the Jewish sabbath, and rose from the dead on the day when the [d] sheaf of first fruits was waved; he placed the completion of the prophecies among the reasons for his submitting to death; and even during his pains on the cross he was intent on accomplishing one of them; for, "that [e] the scripture might be fulfilled, he said, I thirst."

Prayer is the breath of piety. Right affections towards the Deity will express themselves in adoration, confession, thanksgiving, and supplication. Prayer is the great duty and the high privilege of a christian. It is a method of fixing on our minds a sense of God and religion. It is an exercise of the best affections of our nature, which are by this means strengthened and confirmed. It is a source of consolation and

a Luke xxiv. 27. b Matth. v. 18. Luke xvi. 17.
c Ephes. v. 2. Ex. xxix. 39. Acts xxxi. Matth. xxvii. 46, 50.
d 1 Cor. xv. 20. Lev. xxiii. 11. e John xix. 28.

relief under all our distresses. Hence prayer is appointed by God as an instrument of improving our nature; a necessary expression of a devout frame of spirit; and a condition of receiving the divine favours. The scriptures abound in directions and encouragements to this exercise; and with instruction respecting the matter, the manner, and the spirit of prayer. If we attend to the conduct of our Lord with a view to this duty of piety, we shall find it in the highest degree exemplary.

He gave his disciples a form of prayer fitted to guide not only them, but worshippers of all ages, in their address to God. He delivered many precepts and exhortations; to enable and encourage us to pray as we ought. When our Lord was speaking to his disciples of his being soon taken from them; and of his seeing them again, though not to abide any long time personally with them; a part of his conversation related to this interesting subject. [John xvi. 23.] "And in that day ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you." At that time after my removal, you will not be able to address yourselves directly to me, as you now do. But that need not give you any concern; for whatever petitions you present to the

Father in my name, will be heard and answered. Our Lord will have us always "pray in his name"...that is, we must offer prayers to God as his disciples, according to his direction, and in the spirit of his religion; we must also present our addresses to God in and through Jesus Christ as our mediator, and intercessor. We must worship the supreme Being in the character of God and Father of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, "who ever liveth, making intercession for us." The piety no less than benevolence of our Lord, appeared in the care he took to give so many directions concerning prayer. [a] But it is peculiarly instructive and pleasing to view him in his practice of this duty.

Let us consider on what *occasions* he is recorded to have prayed.

The evangelists mention his addresses to God on solemn occurrences in his life. When he was [b] baptised; before he chose his twelve apostles, he went out into a mountain to [c] pray; and immediately before his transfiguration, he took Peter, James, and John apart into a high mountain [d] for the same holy exercise. We read also that he [e] lifted up his eyes to heaven and fervently addressed God in the presence of his disciples,

a See Matth. vi. 33. Mark xi. 25, 26. Matth. vi. 14, 15. Matth. v. 44. Matth. xviii. 19, 20. Luke xviii. 9—14. Matth. vii. 9—11. Luke xi. 9—13. Matth. vi. 7. Luke xviii. 7. Luke xi. 5. 9.
b Luke iii. 21. c Luke vi. 12. d Luke ix. 28. e John xvii. 1.

on the night when Judas betrayed him. Three of the evangelists have recorded his [a] prayer during his agony in the garden of Gethsemane. He bent his knees, he prostrated himself in the eastern manner, he prayed with uncommon intenseness and perseverance, thrice repeating the substance of the same words. Again, while they were fixing him to the cross, he [b] prayed for his murderers; and he expired with a devout commendation of his spirit to God.

Our Lord offered up his devotions after signal displays of his miraculous power. When he had wrought a great number of cures [c] publickly for the first time, when afterwards [d] he had healed great multitudes, and particularly a leper, when he had fed the five thousand with five loaves and two fishes, "he retired into desert places and prayed."

[e] Our Lord's intercession for Peter, that his faith might not fail in the hour of trial, was at once an instance of his piety and benevolence.

It is recorded of him on no less than six occasions, that he gave thanks to God on partaking and distributing food.

The occasions of our Saviour's prayers being often mentioned, we are assisted in forming a judgment of their *matter* as arising out of those

a Matth. xxvi. 9, &c. b Luke xxiii. 34. c Mark i. 35. d Matth. xv. 34. Luke vi. 12—16. e Luke xxii. 32.

occasions; such as supplications for God's blessing in important undertakings, and for his favour to others according to their characters and circumstances; acknowledgments of the extraordinary power which he had imparted, or of his common bounty.

But sometimes we have the advantage of knowing the very words of the prayers which he offered. Having upbraided Chorasin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum for not having repented in consequence of his mighty works, and at another time the seventy having reported to him the mighty works done by them..." [a] I thank thee, said he, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hidden these things from the wise and prudent [events having been so disposed by thy providence, that the proud scribe and disputer of this world are not among my disciples;] and hast revealed them unto babes [unto such plain and uneducated, but humble and well disposed, men as my present followers.] Be it even so, Father, for so hath it seemed good in thy sight."

When Jesus came to the grave of Lazarus, knowing by a divine impulse that he had the power of restoring him to life, "he lifted up his eyes, and said, Father, I thank thee that thou

a Matth. xi. 25. Luke x. 21. b John xi. 41, 42.

hast [now] heard me; and I knew that thou hearest me always; but because of the multitude, which stand by, I have thus spoken, that they may believe that thou hast sent me." When certain gentile proselytes to judaism desired to see Jesus at his last passover, he corrected their false ideas by clear intimations of his death, and thus addressed God: [c] "Father, glorify thy name by my sufferings, and by the supernatural circumstances which shall attend them."

The solemnities of his last supper were closed by him with a most devout and affecting prayer, uttered in the presence of his disciples. [John xvii.]

The prayers which Jesus used [a] during his agony, and while the nails [b] were piercing his hands and his feet, [c] and when he hung on the cross, immediately before he expired, are recorded in his own words.

[d] Christ "spake a parable unto this end, that men ought always to pray and not to faint. There was in a city a judge, who feared not God nor regarded man; and there was a widow in that city, and she came to him, saying, Avenge me of my adversary: and he would not for a while; but afterwards he said within himself, Though I fear not God nor regard man, yet be-

a Matth. xxvi. 39. &c. and parallel passages. b Luke xxiii. 34.
c Luke xxiii. 34. d Luke xviii. 1, &c.

cause this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest, by her continual coming, she weary me." What is the instruction conveyed by this parable? It is this; if a man, that neither fears God nor regards man, insensible to the obligations of both religion and humanity, may be supposed to grant relief to a suppliant, merely on account of the continuance and importunity of the application which is made to him; how much more ought we to believe, that God, who is goodness itself, and who is always doing good to his creatures, supplying the wants which they do not feel nor express, and to whom it is as easy to grant as to deny requests; how much more ought we to believe that this God, upon our earnest and persevering prayer for what we need, will be favourable to our cries, will accept our homage, and will return such answers as infinite wisdom and goodness shall direct? And if the judge in the parable was a proper object of *repeated* addresses, how great is the encouragement, and how strong the obligation, to be diligent, importunate, and persevering in the prayers which we offer to an almighty God and merciful Father? Surely we "ought always to pray and not to faint;" which imports, not that we should be always on our knees, and mind no business except devotion; but that we should

aim to be always in a fit temper to pray; that upon all solemn occasions of life, and under all strong emotions of mind, we should actually address ourselves to God; that we should render worship at stated times, and always with fervour and affection; and lastly, should persevere in prayer, and not remit our devotions, though we see no effect produced. For God's providence walks in the deep; we do not always receive the favours we ask, whether spiritual or temporal. We must not measure the Deity by our impatience; and the effect of our prayers may be real, when it is not perceptible; and we are assured, that when sincerely offered, they shall never return into our bosom void. This idea of continued and repeated devotion does not fall under our Lord's censure of vain repetitions. (4)"For those repetitions are vain, which repeat the words and not the devotion, which renew the expression and not the desire: and he that may pray the same prayer to-morrow, which he said to-day, may pray the same at night, which he said in the morning, and the same at noon which he said at night, and so in all the hours of prayer, and in all the opportunities of devotion. Christ in his agony went thrice, at short intervals, and "said the same words."

"In the same office, and in the same hour of prayer to repeat the same things often, hath but few excuses to make it reasonable, and fewer to make it pious. To think that prayer is the better for such repetition is the fault which our Saviour condemned in the heathen, who in their hymns would say a name over a hundred times. With respect to the language and duration of our prayers reason much determine. He that speaks his needs, and expresses the fervour and greatness of his desire, cannot be vain or long in his prayers; and he that prays without sincerity is long, though he utter but two syllables."

Our Lord's *perseverance* in prayer is observable. St. Luke records of him (vi. 12) that before he chose the twelve, "he went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God." And when he had sent away a great multitude, whom he had fed with a few loaves and fishes, we likewise read that he retired into a mountain, and continued in prayer from the evening to the fourth watch of the night, that is, from between our sixth and ninth hour of the evening, to between the third and sixth hour of the morning. Thus did Jesus converse with his heavenly Father, when he could no longer converse with men, and make an entire dedication of himself to the service of God and man, by gloriously

running an unwearied course of piety and benevolence.

Chiefly occupying such large portions of time in prayer were acts of the holy and heavenly founder of our religion in extraordinary and peculiar circumstances, and can very rarely be the duty of his disciples. In general, his (5) " piety was without the affrightment of precedent, or prodigious instances of actions greater than the imitation of men. The instances of it were actions of a very holy, but of an ordinary life ; and we may observe this difference in the story of Jesus from ecclesiastical writings of certain beatified persons, whose life is told rather to amaze us and to create scruples, than to lead us in the evenness and security of a holy conscience."

Such was the piety of our Lord Jesus Christ. Do we call ourselves his disciples ? Would we secure an interest in his promises, and be qualified for his presence in heaven ? We must imitate his piety, and live to God. Our devout sentiments must appear in our obedient conduct. We must have respect to all the commandments, to precepts of a moral, and precepts of a positive kind, giving to each its proper place and dignity, neither unduly exalting the one nor depressing the other. If we have the spirit of Christ, we shall read the word of God, keep our lips from

profaning his name, and attend upon the services of his house. We shall constantly pray to him in publick and private, in prosperity and adversity, in life and death ; we shall habitually regard him, our God and Father, with fear and love, with trust and hope.

SECT. III.

The Benevolence of our Saviour.

MUTUAL love was enjoined in the law of Moses, and is enforced by new motives in the gospel. There can be no sincere piety without benevolence. They who love God, regard the welfare of his creatures, and they who take delight in his character take delight in goodness. It is the object of the doctrines, precepts, and features of the gospel to correct the selfishness of human nature, and to bring us under the influence of unfeigned benevolence. "This is my commandment," saith Christ, "that ye love one another, even as I have loved you." How hath Christ loved us? With an ardent, a generous, an impartial, an unchangeable love. He hath set us an example of that sympathy, which enters into the pleasures and pains of all beings capable of enjoyment and suffering; of that good will which engages us to promote the welfare of others to the utmost of our power.

It has been justly observed, that (6) "our Lord was a pattern both of the contemplative and active life, shews us how to mix these to the greatest advantage, and by his own example teaches us that we cannot serve God better than by doing

good to men." His benevolence was wonderful and unexampled. Though he was [a] rich, yet for our sakes he became poor, and was a partaker of human infirmities, sin only excepted. During his abode on earth, we have constantly occasion to admire his assiduous and laborious beneficence, his gentle, benign, and affectionate disposition and conduct. The severity of the Baptist's appearance, of his manner of life and address, was wisely intended to raise the attention of the Jews, and to remind them of their ancient prophets; particularly of [b] Elijah, the next in eminence to their great lawgiver Moses. And this rigour of character served as a shade to place our Lord's amiable qualities in a stronger light. There is a true simplicity and force in St. Peter's description of Jesus, that he "went about doing good." He was always dispensing good to the bodies, and particularly to the souls of men. [c] And he is with equal justness and sublimity represented by the prophet Malachi, as "the sun of righteousness, with healing in his wings." The evils of pain and disease, of ignorance and vice, fled before him, as the sun dispels darkness.

But let us illustrate this part of our Lord's character by facts recorded in the gospels.

a 2 Cor. viii. 9. b 2 Kings i. 8. c c. iv. 2.

St. Matthew repeatedly asserts of Jesus, that he healed "all manner of disease and all manner of sickness among the people: and the disorders which, in the opinion of the Jews, were most afflictive and dreadful, seem to have been the special objects of his miraculous power. In general, the miracles of Christ had a *beneficial tendency*, and were acts of goodness as well as power.

Those whom he raised from the dead were, the only son of a widow, the only daughter of Jairus, and Lazarus the friend of his immediate and constant followers. There are some secondary circumstances in his benevolent miracles which well deserve our notice. When a blind man was brought to him at Bethsaida, he did not delegate the humane office to one of his disciples, but [a] himself took him by the hand, and led him out of the city. When he healed a demoniack, an only son, he lifted him from the ground where he lay as dead, and [b] restored him to his father. And, with the same unspeakable benignity, he not only raised the widow of Nain's son, but himself [c] delivered him into her hands.

The love of *mankind* in Jesus always prevailed over the love *of fame*, and *of ease and pleasure*. Such was his attention to those who

a Mark viii. 23. b Luke ix. 42. c Luke vii. 15.

most wanted instruction and reformation, that his enemies invidiously characterised him as the "friend of publicans and sinners." His address to the Jews, burdened with the grievous yoke of the law, and to them and others, feeling the weight of sin and guilt, was truly affectionate, "Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

It is often recorded of him that he sat at meat with Pharisees, though perhaps at the very time his conduct was watched by them with a jealous enmity: and, no doubt, he was at all times intent on softening and subduing the prejudices of that haughty and worldly sect.

His benevolence appeared continually in the form of *mercy*, or kindness to the undeserving. He shewed great benignity to a [a] woman who had been a sinner, by not disdainfully spurning her from him like a proud Pharisee; but by permitting her to anoint his feet, by commending her faith, and by reassuring her of forgiveness.

The benevolence of our Lord was exercised without regard to *national* or *party* distinctions. He performed three [b] miracles on gentiles; and often foretold, both in direct terms and in parables, their admission into his church and into his kingdom of glory.

[a] Luke vii. 36—50. [b] Matth. viii. 13. Mark vii. 29. Luke xvii. 16.

The Samaritans were a people against whom the Jews entertained the strongest prejudices, and the sharpest religious enmity. But our Lord's mind was so far from being tinctured with hatred towards them, that he shewed them the greatest humanity. At the [a] well of Jacob he instructed a woman of Samaria, and unreservedly declared to her his Messiahship: he spake of the Samaritans as a part of his spiritual harvest; at their request he remained in their city two days; and during that interval gave them ample reason to conclude from his divine instructions that he was the Saviour of the world.

When he related the beautiful [b] parable of the wounded Jewish traveller, a Samaritan was represented as softening and binding up his wounds, and taking the most tender care of him; and was accordingly proposed as a perfect example of compassion and beneficence to his hearers, and to his disciples in all ages.

When the Samaritans refused to receive him and his apostles, because they were journeying to Jerusalem, and James and John, full of natural animosity towards them, asked permission to consume them by fire from heaven, our Lord reproved their intemperate zeal in these instructive words, "Ye know not what manner

a John. iv. b Luke x. c C. ix.

of spirit ye are of: for the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them."

When the [a] Samaritan leper "glorified God with a loud voice" for his recovery, "and fell down on his face at Jesus' feet, giving him thanks," our Lord placed his gratitude in the fullest light: "Were there not ten cleansed? but where are the nine? There are not found, that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger."

And though, when our Lord sent out the twelve, he forbad them to go into the way of [b] the gentiles, or to enter into a city of the Samaritans, who were of gentile origin, it being the privilege of the Jews that the gospel should be first preached to them; yet he shewed how superiour he was to the malevolence of the times, and how attentive to remove it from others, when, immediately before his ascension, he thus addressed the apostles: "Ye [c] shall be witnesses unto me, both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

And at another time, when he commanded, that an offender, who despised publick and private admonition, should be to his disciples as a [d] *heathen* and a *publican*, he meant to explain the manner in which a christian brother was to

a Luke xvii. 15—18. b Matth. x. 15. c Acts i. 8.
d Matth. xviii. 17.

be avoided on such occasions, and adapted his language to Jewish customs and ideas.

Whilst the good will of Jesus Christ was thus *impartial* and *universal*, he showed a particular *regard* to his *countrymen*. After Jesus had wrought [a] miracles both in Jerusalem and in Galilee, and his [b] fame as a prophet had been spread abroad, he went to [c] Nazareth, his place of abode from his second to about his thirtieth year. Here he raised the wonder of the Nazarenes at his gracious words, and declared himself a prophet; censuring at the same time their prejudices against him on account of his humble descent, and intimating, with much dignity, that they were as unworthy of him as their forefathers had been of the great prophets Elijah and Elisha. At this they were so enraged, that he was compelled to preserve his life by miracle.

When he had still further excited attention, and exalted his character, by working numberless miracles in Galilee, by displaying his power to the Jewish rulers and to the whole people at another passover, by calling the twelve, by the wonderful wisdom and authority of his copious instructions on the mount, and even by raising the dead, probably after the interval of more than a year, he graciously vouchsafed to [d] revisit the

a John ii. 11, 23. iv. 54. b Luke iv. 14. c Ib. 16—30.
d Matth. xiii. 54—58.

place of his education. His countrymen were again astonished at his wisdom; and also expressed their admiration at his mighty works. But still they were offended at the obscurity of his birth. And, on account of their unbelief, he did not deem it wise and fit to do many miracles among them, "save that he laid his hands on a few sick, and healed them."

How affectionate were these visits, and particularly the second! they prove that our Lord could not be deterred by fear of contempt, by ingratitude, or danger, from prosecuting his gracious design towards his countrymen.

There is a branch of benevolence which consists in almsgiving or relieving poverty from our worldly substance: and our Lord, well knowing the great importance of this virtue, has given it the weight of his example. He, who wrought a miracle to pay the tribute money, and who had not where to lay his head, has recommended it by his own practice. This we learn, as we do many shining parts of our Lord's character, from an incidental circumstance. When he said to the traitor Judas, "What thou doest, do

quickly ;" some of his disciples understood him as commanding that he who kept the bag " should give something to the [a] poor :" whence we may infer that this was our Lord's custom.

There is often a mixture of benevolence and authority in our Lord's form of address. He is distinguished by a *tender treatment* and encouragement of all who approached him, or with whom he had intercourse. When a paralytick was let down through the roof of a house, where Jesus was instructing and healing many, he thus removed all fear of impropriety and intrusion, " Take courage, son ; thy sins are forgiven thee." He used the same appellation to his disciples, " Sons, how hard is it for those who trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God !" When the woman who had an issue of blood, incurable by natural means, came behind Jesus in the press, touched his garment, and immediately perceived that she was healed ; Jesus " looked round about to see her who had done this thing." And when the woman, fearing and trembling through uncertainty what construction might be put on her conduct, told him the whole truth, he thus graciously dispelled her fears,

[a] John xiii. 29.

"Take courage, daughter; thy faith hath restored thee to health: go in peace, and be healed of thy disease." And probably, on many occasions, though two only are recorded, our Lord used a language which St. John in his venerable old age seems to have imitated, calling his disciples by the endearing name of children.

How open our Saviour was to the *kind affections* appears from his sensations towards the young man who had kept the commandments from his youth; "[a] Jesus beheld him and loved him."

Observe how he acted when "[b] some brought to him little children, that he might lay his hands on them and pray." "The disciples rebuked those who brought them," as if such objects were unworthy of his attention. "But when Jesus saw it, he had indignation, called them to him," exhorted men to imitate their amiable qualities, "took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them." Every heart must be warmed by the plain recital of such a conduct, and every tongue must praise it.

His *precepts of benevolence* afford a striking picture of his benevolent mind. "[c] Thou

a Mark x. 21. b Matth. xix. 13—15, and parallel places.
c Matth. xxii. 39.

shalt love thy neighbour as thyself," is the commandment to which he assigned the second rank. Nay, he enjoined the [a] love of our enemies, and declared, that the love of those who love us is thankless and unrewardable. We are to make mutual love our distinguishing [b] mark as christians; and his [c] new commandment is, that we love one another, according to that eminent degree of love with which he loved us.

Thus did he strive to prevent the train of evils accidentally occasioned by religion; which inflames men's passions in proportion to its importance. And he directly condemned persecution in those memorable words, "Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of; for the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them:" and again, in the [d] parable where, under the character of a husbandman who sowed good seed in his field, he forbad gathering together the tares, or destroying the sons of the evil one who gave offence by pernicious doctrines or by unrighteous lives, lest at the same time the wheat should be rooted up with them: lest good men, whose interests were interwoven with

a Matth. v. 44, 46. b John xiii. 34, 5. c Luke ix. 55, 56.
d Matth. xiii. 24—30, 36—43.

them, should partake of their sufferings; lest the principle, supposed to justify the extermination of such, should sometimes involve the good; and lest the interest of the gospel itself should be impaired, when its professors, like wild beasts, worried and devoured each other. In the time of harvest, at the last day, our Lord will say to his reapers, the angels, "Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them; but gather the wheat into my garner." And if men extirpate each other for speculative errours in religion, or for such iniquitous practices as do not endanger society, they boldly invade his province who alone can infallibly discern truth from falsehood, and know the various aggravations or alleviations of wrong conduct. The compulsion which should be used by Christ's followers is reason and argument; as he himself[a] *compelled* the Gentiles to receive his gospel by enduing the preachers of it with wisdom and power from on high: he laid them under a *moral necessity* of believing, by furnishing the fullest means of conviction.

The manner in which our Lord prepared the *apostles* for his departure, and the conso-

[a] See Luke xiv. 23, compared with Matth. xxii. 9.

lation which he administered to them, were, in the highest degree, *affectionate*. He often foretold his death, and called their attention to it in the strongest terms: "[a] Let these words sink down into your ears: for the Son of man is about to be delivered into the hands of men, and they shall kill him; and after he is killed, he shall rise again the third day." And, on the evening before his death, he calmed their minds with the utmost delicacy of address, and with the greatest enlargement of affection towards them: "Let[b] not your heart be troubled: believe in God; believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions;...I go to prepare a place for you." "I will[c] pray the Father, and he shall give you another advocate, that he may abide with you always." "Peace[d] I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." "[e] Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me."

Such was the sensibility of his disposition, and his benevolent horrour at Judas's ingrati-

a Luke ix. 44, and parallel places. b John xiv. 1, 2. c Ib. 16.
d John xiv. 27. e xvii. 24.

tude and guilt, that he could not mention his traiterous design at the paschal supper without great emotion: "[a] he was troubled in spirit, and testified, and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you that one of you shall betray me."

His ignominious and painful death was the greatest act of benevolence to the whole world. "[b] Greater love than this hath no man, that a man lay down his life for his friends." "But [c] God commended his love towards us in that, while we were yet sinners and enemies, Christ died for us."

After our Lord's resurrection, his benevolence shone with the same degree of mild lustre. We have remarkable proofs of it in his conduct to St. Peter. One of the angels who appeared to the women at his sepulchre thus addressed them; and, no doubt, in conformity to our Lord's command: "[d] Depart, say to his disciples and to Peter, He goeth before you into Galilee." And two of the sacred [e] writers have recorded his separate appearance to this apostle on the day of his resurrection. He appeared not apart to St. John, his beloved disciple, but to him who had thrice denied him, who had bitterly be-

a John xviii. 21. b xv. 13. c Rom. v. 8, 10. d Mark xvi. 7.
e Luke xxiv. 34. 1 Cor. xv. 5.

wailed his crime, and whose mind stood in need [a] of healing: and with the same kind attention our Lord afterwards afforded Peter an occasion of expiating, as it were, his three denials of him by [b] thrice declaring his love.

With an admirable consistency, our gracious Saviour ended as he began. [c] He was taken up to heaven in the very act of lifting up his hands on his disciples and blessing them.

Nor must we stop here. He is now our [d] intercessor at God's right hand, and will hereafter be the [e] dispenser of eternal life to the righteous: and he has taught us to [f] anticipate his conduct on that day; when he will allot so high a rank to the virtue of benevolence as to place actions arising from it among our leading and essential duties, and will shew so intimate a concern and affection for his disciples, as to regard acts of humanity done to the meanest of them as done to himself.

By the example of Jesus our master, let us be instructed in the nature, and prompted to the exercise, of that charity which is the end of the commandment. We see that true charity is extensive and universal, reaching to

a Beausobre refers to this circumstance, and in explaining it beautifully adds; Jesus showed Peter that, though he had forgotten his Lord in the time of his humiliation, his Lord did not forget him after his exaltation.

b John xxi. c Luke xxiv. 51. d Rom. viii. 34. Heb. vii. 25.

e Rom. vi. 23. John xvii. 2. f Matth. xxv.

all who are capable of happiness or misery, virtue and vice. Whilst it is principally exerted towards those who are nearest, and to whom we have most opportunity of being useful, it promotes an inoffensive, generous, and useful course of behaviour to all. It composes and checks our unsocial passions, and, in our conduct to others, makes us watchful against every thing which may provoke, grieve, or injure them. "For love worketh no evil to its neighbour." It extinguishes the fire of malice, and subdues the swellings of pride; restrains the sallies of insolence, and prevents indecorous and unseemly manners. "For it doth not behave itself unseemly." It enlarges the selfish disposition, seeketh not her own, and scorns to bend every thing to personal advantage and pleasure. It takes no satisfaction in the errours and faults of others, and renders us incapable of deriving happiness from their crimes and punishments..."for charity rejoiceth not in iniquity" or its consequences.

Where this principle resides, the heart is open to humane and generous affections, feels a constant impulse to acts of liberality and kindness, and is uniformly intent on promoting the peace, comfort, and happiness of

mankind. "It is kind," springing to embrace all opportunities of conferring benefits; suffering long before it will withdraw its good opinion from others, or cast them off as unworthy of notice or regard.

In particular, as the blessed Jesus came into the world to save it, they who possess his spirit will enter into the same design; and make the *salvation* of others, as well as of themselves, the great business of their lives. Though they cannot contribute to this end in the same way that he did, they can in other ways, according to their capacities and opportunities, promote the cause of truth and righteousness. No circumstances of life can hinder us from being at least *examples* of piety and goodness, and making our conduct a lesson to all with whom we are connected.

Whatever ends we can suppose the commands of the deity and the discoveries of the gospel intended to answer, the disposition to serve and bless mankind must promote. Are they designed to reflect honour on the Supreme Being? The light of good works directly contributes to glorify the author of good. Are the exaltation and acceptance of the character of the Son of God among men important objects of the christian revelation?

What proof of regard to him is so convincing, what recommendation of him to the esteem of the world so persuasive, as that which we afford by loving one another, as he has loved us, and doing good to those for whose happiness he lived and died. Doth the "commandment" aim to mend and improve human nature, and raise it to a resemblance of the divine? Benevolence is great and godlike. Is the welfare of society a leading purpose of the gospel? Let the love of our neighbour, built on the love of God, possess all hearts; the principal causes of discord, uneasiness, and misery among men are controlled, or prevented, and the interest of the whole becomes the interest of the parts. Is it the object of the benign religion of Christ to make every one who receives it as happy as he is capable of being here and hereafter? He, in whom devout and benevolent affections dwell and reign, wants no ingredient of self enjoyment. For to bless is to be blest. Finally, to do good to men, without looking to their returns of service, to their praise, or even their gratitude, is to act as children of the Highest, and to be prepared for that society above, which is composed entirely of friendly beings, of pure angels and perfected saints, whose

hearts are purified from every malevolent feeling; and from whose breasts the foul spirit of jealousy, envy, and hatred, those fiends of darkness is forever banished. Among the inhabitants of that world, all souls are inflamed with the love of God and the love of other beings. There all appropriate the happiness of all, and every one is blessed in partaking and promoting the bliss of every one. There faith shall be lost in sight, and hope in possession, but charity shall keep her power, and diffuse her influence through eternal ages.

SECT. IV.

Of our Lord's compassion.

In those dispositions which are eminently benevolent we may justly expect to find the most lively sensibility and compassion: for compassion is a benevolent sensation towards the miserable; it is that humane uneasiness which is excited by the evils of human life, in proportion to their degree, and to the merit of the sufferer. Our Lord has expressly enjoined this virtue, "Be ye merciful as your father also is merciful;" and he has annexed to it a special blessedness: "Blessed are the merciful for they shall obtain mercy."

He has recommended it to our practice in the parable of the good Samaritan; [a] and he has [b] enforced it by the example of God himself, both under the similitude of a king who took account with his servants, and under that of a father receiving into favour a wasteful and unworthy son.

The three parables referred to are remarkably affecting. Nothing can more forcibly inculcate commiseration than the example of

a Luke x. 33, 37. b Matth. xviii. 23, 33. Luke xv. 20.

the Samaritan, who, though estranged from the Jews by every circumstance most apt to inflame the human mind with hatred, yet shewed mercy to the wounded Jewish traveller, the sight of whose distress moved not a priest and a Levite, who were of his own nation, and employed in the sacred offices of his own religion. Nothing can be more strongly contrasted and condemned than the merciless behaviour of him, who was inexorable to his fellowservant, took him by the throat, and rigidly exacted a debt of an hundred pence, when his lord had forgiven him ten thousand talents. "His lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him." Nothing can represent in a more lively manner the compassion of God to the gentile world in particular, and to repenting sinners in general, than the image of a father, who, when he saw yet a great way off his son returning to him after he had wasted his substance with riotous living, had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him, and rejoiced as though he had received him again from the dead.

The images with which these parables abound shew an overflowing tenderness and humanity: and our Divine Instructer seems

to have peculiarly delighted, and excelled, if we may so speak, in delivering lessons of this kind.

In his own life he has given us a bright example of this virtue. He deeply compassionated the spiritual and temporal wants of mankind. "When [a] he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they were wearied [with following him for the benefit of his miracles and instructions,] and scattered abroad as sheep having no shepherd. Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few: Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest." On another occasion also, when he saw much people he had [b] compassion on them, and "began to teach them many things." He miraculously fed them in the desert from the same [c] principle; and, prompted by this amiable virtue, [d] healed a leper, restored [e] the sight of two blind men near Jericho, and when [f] a dead man was carried out of Nain, the only son of his mother and she a widow, generously overcome by her distress, he said to her, Weep not, and raised her son to life.

a Matth. ix. 36, 7, 8. b Mark vi. 34.
c Mark viii. 2. d c. i. 41. e Matth. xx. 34. f Luke vii. 13.

So justly may our Lord be described in the language of the prophet Isaiah, as binding up the brokenhearted, as feeding his flock like a shepherd, as gathering up the lambs in his arm, as carrying them in his bosom, and gently leading those that were with young.

It must be further observed that our compassionate Lord was no stranger to the most sensible emotions of the human heart, and to the strongest *outward expressions* of them. It is thrice recorded of him that he wept. Once indeed his own sufferings were the cause, "[g] when he offered up prayers and supplications, with a strong cry and tears, unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard" from the filial reverence with which he prayed, an [h] angel being sent from heaven to comfort him.

Another occasion of his tears was his prophetick foresight of the destruction which impended over Jerusalem, and of the complicated and unexampled calamities which would attend it. "When he approached, he beheld the city and wept over it, saying: If [a] even thou [who hast killed so many prophets] hadst known, at least [after so many calls to repentance] in this thy day [of merciful and final

g Hebr. v. 7. h Luke xxii. 43. a ib. xix. 41, 2.

trial,] the things which belong unto thy peace—But now they are hidden from thine eyes."

It is also recorded of Jesus that he [b] wept, in St. John's simple and beautiful account of his raising Lazarus from the dead. Some think that it was not unworthy of our Lord to weep from a sympathy observable in the best minds, because he "[c] saw Mary weeping and the Jews also weeping who came with her." Generous dispositions are overcome by the distress of others; and particularly by the anguish of friends. Others suppose that reflections on the malignant effects of sin, which introduced misery and death, might draw from him this expression of his grief for the calamities of human life. It has likewise been suggested that Christ might lament the inefficacy of his heavenly lessons in comforting his disciples under the temporary loss of those who were most dear to them. But the principal cause of his tears seems to have been, his experience of unbelief in the Jews and in his disciples. On other [d] occasions he was grieved at hardness of heart; he sighed deeply in spirit when the Pharisees sought of

b John xi. 35. c ib. 33. d Mark iii. 5. viii. 12.

him a sign from heaven, tempting him; and he expressed himself pathetically at want of rational faith in that power which he so wonderfully [e] displayed: "O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you?" alluding to the original want of faith which he immediately perceived in the father of the demoniack, and which the man soon expressed when he said, "But, if thou canst do any thing, help us": and also referring to the want of confidence in God's assistance betrayed by his disciples, who, not having attained that entire belief in God which was the result of prayer and fasting, were unable to cast out the demon. Thus in the passage before us, Jesus seems to have groaned in spirit, to have been troubled, and to have wept, chiefly because his former power, repeatedly evinced in raising the dead, had so little effect on the Jews, on the sisters of Lazarus, and on his apostles. This is intimated to us by the evangelist. Some of the Jews said, could not he, who opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that this man also should not have died? On which St. John observes, "Jesus [f] *therefore*, again groaning in himself cometh to the grave."

e Mark ix. 19, and parallel places. f John xi. 37, 8. See also v. 16, 32.

"From this view of our Saviour's disposition towards the miserable, we learn the excellency of a compassionate temper. Many persons pretend to regard the tender passions as a mark of weakness. Ambitious of being considered stoicks and philosophers, they disdain to be moved on any occasion. But we have not known the spirit of Christ, if we are ashamed of that sensibility, which makes us alive to the miseries of others, and enables us to "weep with them who weep." Have not the greatest men, and the most eminent saints, possessed a large share of this tenderness? Are they not frequently painted in tears? Abraham was a brave and a good man; and yet we read, that he mourned and wept. Joseph, David, and Jonathan also were no strangers to these emotions. Hezekiah and Jeremiah wept sore. And that great christian hero, St. Paul, frequently shed tears, if not on his own personal account, yet out of compassion to others. We need not therefore be ashamed to resemble such characters; still less ought we to think it unworthy of our dignity as men, or our profession as christians, to have the same disposition, which was also in Christ. We behold his compassion; we ask it for ourselves. Shall we not sympathize with one another, and

view with pity the case of the dejected, the mistaken, the sinful? He, who in the midst of the common sufferings of life feels not for the distressed, who relents not at his neighbour's grief, nor scans his failings and transgressions with the eye of a brother, must be sensible that he excludes himself from the commiseration of Christ. But whilst we attend to the mercy of our Saviour, and regard it as a pattern, we must guard against the abuse of the circumstance, that our Lord was touched with a feeling of our infirmities. The amiable view which the gospel gives of his clemency may flatter some men with unwarrantable hopes, and lead them to expect impunity for their deliberate and wilful sins. But the compassion of Jesus differed widely from that undistinguishing and capricious indulgence, which is sometimes found among men. It is the compassion of an impartial mind, enlightened by wisdom, and guided by justice, extending pardon to the defects of the sincere, but not to the sins of the presumptuous; and least of all to those, who encourage themselves in evil from the hope, that God is too pitiful to mark against them their known and allowed offences.(5)

SECT. V.

Of our Lord's Justice.

When St. Peter calls our Lord the [a] Just One, and when that title is [b] elsewhere attributed to him, it is meant, that he was universally [c] righteous and good. It is no where said of him, that he was just in the usual sense of the word justice, as it consists in [d] rendering to all men their due. Indeed, justice, as defined by moral writers, is a virtue in our intercourse with others, which is the lowest, though an essential, part of a great character. Our Lord was more than just; he rendered to men more than their due, and overflowed to them in an unbounded degree of love.

Though Christ has not delivered direct and special precepts on this subject, he commended [e] just servants and stewards; [f] judgment, which may well import a publick and

a Acts iii. 14. b Matth. xxvii. 19, 24. Luke xxiii. 47, &c.

c See Matth. iii. 15. i. 19. i. ix. 13. xxv. 46. Luke xxiii. 50. and Rom. v. 7. where the latter part of the verse is a correction of the former: "Yet I will allow that for a good or righteous man [the words δικαιος and αγαθος being equivalent] some will even dare to die."

d Rom. xiii. 7. e Matth. xxiv. 45. xxv. 21. Luke xii. 42. xix. 17. f Luke xi. 42.

private dispensing of justice, is ranked by him with that primary duty, the love of God; and the same [a] virtue and fidelity, in our words and actions, are elsewhere mentioned by him among the weightier matters of the law: he condemned the opposite vice, when he described an unjust judge who feared not God nor regarded man, when he taught that moral pollution was contracted by [b] theft and deceit, and when he denounced a woe on the scribes and pharisees for cleansing the outside of the cup and dish, when within they were full of rapine and injustice.[c]

In the parable [d] of the steward who was accused to the rich man his master as wasting his substance, our Lord selected a single circumstance from his conduct, which he proposed to the imitation of his disciples in prosecuting their great end, the attainment of an eternal reward. In the course of the narration, the steward is expressly called unjust; and his injustice was branded by his dismission. What his master praised was his wisdom and foresight, his subtle and ingenious management in securing to himself friends. He punished his dishonesty, but acknowledged

a Matth. xxiii. 23. Matth. xix. 18. b Mark vii. 22. See also John x. 1, 10. c Matth. xxiii. 25. d Luke xvi.

his art and cunning. What Christ himself observed on this parable was, that, in general, worldly men were wiser in conducting their temporal affairs, than good men with respect to their spiritual concerns; in which remark he has ranked the unjust steward among those whose views began and ended with this life; and has opposed his character to that of men whose actions will bear the light, and who will inherit the glorious reward of the saints in light. And his [a] exhortation to his disciples was, that they would make a prudent use of riches, which generally administered to unrighteousness, and deserved not the name of a true and solid acquisition; and would be faithful stewards of them, so as finally to gain the friendship of God by rightly dispensing them. Thus, on another [b] occasion, our Lord did not require of his followers that they should imitate the impious, unjust, and shameless judge described by him, or that they should be overcome by mere importunity; but the moral of his parable was, that men should pray always, and not faint; particularly in those times of persecution. And it is very observable, that the application of

a There is an opposition between the beginning of verse 9, and that of 8, in Luke xvi. b Luke xviii. 1—8.

these parables is made for us; and that our Lord is unusually large in explaining the uses of the former, and thus guarding it from misconstruction.

SECT. VI.

Of our Lord's Temperance.

It is observable of Christ, that he did not aim at striking the people by an austerity of appearance and conduct. He came "[a] eating and drinking;" in contradistinction to the solitariness and abstinence of his harbinger, John the Baptist; a conduct on which the Jews put a perverse interpretation, and were neither pleased with the rigour of the Baptist, nor with our Lord's familiar and conversible manner; though the wisdom of such a deportment, in him who "[b] came to seek and to save that which was lost," carried its own [c] justification with it to the well disposed and considerate. The calumny advanced by the inconsistent Jews of our Lord's time was a general one, confuted by facts: it was as groundless as their assertion, that he was a friend to publicans and sinners, when he conversed with them only to reclaim them. It was truly remarked by one of the fathers that,

a Matth. xi. 19. Compare Luke v. 33, with Matth. ix. 14, Mark ii. 18.
b Luke xix. 10. c Matth. xi. 10. Origen, contra Cels. l. 3. 4. 36.

amidst numberless accusations and falsehoods, none could object to him the least act of self indulgence. He appeared in a state of poverty, and endured the inconveniences incident to it: some of his followers ministered to him of their substance, and he had not where to lay his head.

We read that Jesus was present at a [a] marriage-feast very early in his ministry; and on this occasion some objectors to his conduct have alleged that he contributed to intemperance by the first miracle which he wrought.

But it is probable that the guests at this feast were many: a supposition which seems agreeable to the custom of the Jews; to the appointment of a governour; and to the circumstance that [b] "both Jesus was called, and his disciples, to the marriage-feast:" for what was the number of converts at that time cannot be determined.

Neither can it be ascertained during how many days the marriage-feast continued. We read of some which lasted [c] seven days; and thus, if Jesus was present on the [d] third day

a John ii. 1—11. b Matth. xxii. 1—14. Luke xiv. 8—10. Judges xiv. 10. c Judges xiv. 12. Tobit xi. 19.

d The best interpretation of this passage is, "on the third day" after Jesus's arrival in Galilee: which may have been the first day of the feast.

of the feast, it might have been protracted, and much frequented, for four days onwards.

Nor is it easy to fix what was the quantity of wine produced. Our translation may give too definite an idea to a word signifying any capacious vessel in general; or if a determinate measure is meant, which is most agreeable to the evangelist's mode of expression, it may be [a] one said to contain a little more than seven pints.

It has also been very properly suggested that great part of the wine provided might have been considered as a [b] benevolent nuptial present, acceptable to persons who were probably in an humble station, and to be partly reserved for other occasions; and that "the quantity furnished, supposing it as great as any objector has stated, was both an act of exuberant goodness, and gave such magnificence to the miracle as removed it beyond all possibility of fraud." Abundance administers to the debasing and brutal act of intemperance only among the vicious: and the religious awe impressed by the miracle naturally tended to prevent it.

a The Syrian metretes. b See Bishop Pearce: comment: ii. 374. Doddridge and Macknight in loc.

It must likewise be observed that a lighter wine might be in ordinary use among the Jews: and we know that the wines, now made from the grapes of Lebanon and Hermon, are not of an intoxicating quality when taken freely.

Nor do the words, used by the governour of the feast, import that the guests had been guilty of excess at that particular time. According to the usual custom, "every man at first setteth on good wine, and when men have drunk fully or plentifully, then that which is worse: thou hast kept the good wine until now;" until the present day, and the feast itself, are far advanced: in which circumstance alone, I mean the lateness of time when the good wine was given, the parallel may hold, and not further: though indeed the expression, does not necessarily imply intoxication, but may be understood of that abundance which temperate men on some occasions innocently partake of.

It should be remarked of our Lord's attendance and conduct at this marriage, that they were a testimony from the great Founder of our religion in favour of that state as a pure and honourable one. And though he himself led a life of celibacy, he mentioned marriage as

[a] a divine institution, [b] subjected it to wise regulations, and expected, even at that peculiar time, that only a select [c] few would detach themselves from domestick ties "on account of the kingdom [d] of heaven," then to be extended by their means. Nor did he subject these to any ensnaring restraint, but made their own prudence the rule of their conduct.

Thus did our Lord display a prophetick foresight and a divine wisdom. For ecclesiastical history informs us that, from the infancy of the gospel, hereticks of various denominations arose, who asserted the unlawfulness of marriage. We likewise know that the church of Rome forbids marriage to one order at this day; notwithstanding the apostle's very remarkable manner of expressing himself, that it is "[e] honourable in all men;" and notwithstanding an overseer of Christ's flock is described as "the [f] husband of one wife, and one that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all [g] gravity."

a Matth. xix. 4, 5, 6. b Ib. v. 32. c Ib. xix. 11, 12.
d See Mark ix. 29. e Heb. xiii. 4.
f i. e. not guilty of polygamy or of causeless divorce. 1 Tim. iii. 2, 4.
g Σεμνοτης here denotes the mean between rigour and familiarity.

We may likewise discern a wisdom in the specifick miracle performed at Cana. For the use of wine in any degree was forbidden by the Marcionites and Manichees among the christians, and afterwards by the successful Arabian impostor.

On this occasion too, and on many others, our Lord shewed that his religion was not a morose and unsociable one; and he discountenanced by his example that course of rigid abstinence and mortification by which some, who would be thought his most perfect disciples, have disgraced the gospel. When [a] one of the Pharisees desired him that he would eat with him, he went into the Pharisee's house, and sat down to meat with other guests. He shewed a like condescension to [b] another of that sect, immediately after some of them had ascribed his miracles to Satan. When Matthew, who from a publican was called to be an apostle, made a great feast, Jesus and his disciples partook of it in company with many publicans and sinners. He [c] ate bread on the sabbath day with a ruler of the pharisees; thus teaching that even the strictness of the Jewish sabbath did not wholly exclude

a Luke vii. 36, 49. b Ib. xi. 37.
c Luke v. 29, and parallel places. d Luke xiv. 1.

this kind of social intercourse; much less the day on which his followers were to commemorate his own resurrection, provided it do not occupy an undue proportion of time, nor interfere with the publick and private duties of religion proper to the day. We also read that he was guest to [a] Zaccheus, a chief of the publicans, and therefore of a profession most hateful to the Jews: but he disregarded the invidiousness of the action on account of the man's personal virtues; and exhibited the character of a perfect teacher, despising that of a popular one. Again: we find him partaking of a [b] supper in Bethany, in the house of Simon, whom he had probably healed of a leprosy. This was on the third day before his crucifixion; so sedate and composed was his mind: and this supper was attended with a more splendid and more magnificent circumstance than the feasts of kings ever presented: Lazarus, whom our Lord raised from the dead after he had seen corruption, "was one of those who sat at meat," and thus graced the triumph of this conqueror of sin and death.

The temptation of Jesus was preceded by a fast of forty days, resembling, in its duration

a Luke xiv. 5. b Matth. xxvi. 6, and parallel places.

and miraculous nature, the fasts of [a] Moses and Elias. As he entered on his ministry immediately afterwards, he thus taught us a general lesson, that it may be expedient to fast on solemn occasions: a duty practised by the prophets [b] and teachers who separated Paul and Barnabas to the work of the ministry; and by [c] Paul and Barnabas themselves, when they ordained elders in the churches of Asia, and commended their converts to the Lord in whom they believed. We have not even an intimation in the gospels that our Lord fasted at other times. In one [d] place indeed, he regulated fasting as an acknowledged duty, and carefully removed from it all ostentation: and in another, he observed to his apostles that great acts of faith were not to be exerted in performing the most signal miracles, but by that higher degree of goodness, to the attainment of which prayer and [e] fasting contributed. But it is plain that he seemed remarkable [f] to the disciples of John and of the Pharisees for not exercising his disciples in acts of abstinence. When questioned about this, he assigned two reasons: that he would not anticipate the days of fasting which his afflicted and

a Ex. xxxiv. 28. 1 Kings xix. 8. b Acts xiii. 3.
c Acts xiv. 23. d Matth. vi. 16—18.
e Matth. xvii. 20, 21. f Mark ii. 18, &c.

persecuted disciples would observe after his departure from them; and that he would not discourage new converts by requiring of them those severer duties which belonged to persons of full growth in religion, and capable of going on to perfection. This latter argument was not directly stated by him, but delicately insinuated by the following similitudes. The conduct, which is expected from me, would be like adding a piece of new and unwrought cloth to an old garment: or like putting new wine into old bottles of leather, which would burst them by its fermentation: or like setting new wine before one who had immediately partaken of old wine. And as our Lord was so cautious not to give his religion a disgusting appearance, its true friends should follow his example; not expecting in any man a deadness to human society and human enjoyments; not exacting austerities which God has not commanded; not laying a great stress on indifferent or frivolous observances, which serve only to burden and disquiet men; not prescribing a particular kind of food, on certain days and at certain seasons, to all christians in all places; but for the most part, leaving to general rules, and to private discretion, the total and partial, the stated and occasional,

abstinence from lawful gratifications of our natural appetites. Our Lord's strongest precept is, "If [a] any man be willing to come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow me:" Whoever desires to be my follower, at this particular time, must undergo a peculiar degree of self denial, and must expose his life daily. The true self denial of christians in these ages is abstinence from vice: though all must allow that prudential acts of self denial, in matters of an indifferent nature, are highly proper by way of moral discipline, and of subserviency to the habit of self government.

Christ has abolished the Mosaick distinction of meats by the following solemn decision: "[b] Hear and understand: Not that which entereth into the mouth defileth a man:" meaning that the *kind* of food did not defile him, though the excessive *degree* might. The defilement, which *his* disciples should avoid, is that of the mind and conscience, by evil thoughts, words, and actions.

We do not find that the virtue of temperance is any where expressly inculcated by our Lord, though it is included in the general injunctions of self denial, and though it is re-

[a] Luke ix. 23. [b] Matth. xv. 11.

peatedly enjoined in the writings of his [a] apostles. And no man can pretend to be a follower of Christ, who does not aim to keep in subjection all his animal appetites. Intemperance and impurity are utterly inconsistent with the love of God, the love of man, the care of our worldly interest, and, above all, with our attainment to the spiritual happiness of the heavenly state.

Purity of heart, and a strict command of the eye, that it wander not to illicit objects, are [b] taught and enforced by our Lord; and impurity is [c] censured and forbidden. However, there are not wanting passages in our Lord's short instructions where excess is strongly condemned. "[d] Take heed, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness." And sudden and final destruction is twice denounced against the evil servant, who shall say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming: and shall eat, and drink, and be drunken.

a Gal. v. 23. 2 Pet. i. 6. b Matth. v. 8, 28.
c Matth. v. 32. Mark vii. 2. xix. 19. d Luke xxi. 34.

SECT. VII.

Of the Meekness of Jesus Christ.

THE regulation of anger is an important part of self government: and this virtue was eminently displayed by our Lord on many occasions. He has also both made it the subject of a precept, and pronounced a blessing on it: "[a] Blessed are the meek; for they shall inherit the earth:" they shall enjoy [b] quiet, conciliate friends, and escape injuries. And he has forewarned us that improper anger will incur punishment: "[c] Whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause, shall be in danger of the judgment." In another place he finely reproved the unjust anger of the Jews against the gentiles, on account of their admission into the same external privileges with themselves under the christian covenant. The parable to which I allude prophetically represents the elder brother as[d] *angry*, and refusing to partake of the feast which his compassionate Father had prepared on the younger brother's return.

a Matth. v. 5. b Ps. xxxvii. 11. c Matth. v. 22.
d Luke xv. 28.

In our Lord's conduct towards his *disciples* there appears as much mildness and gentleness, as there was dulness and unbelief among them. When they contended which should be the greatest, he gave them [a] the softest reproof by setting a child before them, and teaching them that christian greatness was to be obtained by imitating such lowliness. When the resentment of James and John would have led them to consume the Samaritans by fire from heaven for their inhospitality, there was a quickness in his manner suited to the occasion: but the censurer wore a benign aspect, and suggested a palliation of their conduct in their ignorance: "He [b] turned, and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of: for the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them." When the twelve so unseasonably contended for superiority on the night of the paschal supper, there was much kindness in his manner of correcting their false ideas. [c] Having observed the difference between his kingdom and worldly ones, exaltation among his followers depending on their humility; he proposed

a Matth. xviii. 2. b Luke ix. 55, 6. c ib. xxii. 24—30.

to them his own example, during his intercourse with them, turned their views to future greatness in his spiritual kingdom, and enforced his gracious words by a most eminent act of humility in [a] washing their feet: an office of condescension, which he exhorted them to imitate in their general conduct towards each other. When during his agony in the garden of Gethsemane, Peter, James, and John, though commanded to watch and pray, slept through [b] sorrow; though himself in an afflicted state of mind, which is most prone to impatience, and tho' not insensible of his slighted authority, of their culpable security in the midst of danger, and of their unconcern at his own anguish of soul, yet he softened his expostulation by an excuse, "The [c] spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."

There was great moderation in Christ's behaviour towards *Judas*. When this apostle murmured against Mary for anointing Jesus with precious ointment, pretending that the price might have been given to the poor, but in fact regretting that he had lost an opportunity of partly converting it to his own use, our Lord enlarged on the piety of Mary's

a John xiii. 1—15. b Compare Luke xxii. 45. John xvi. 6.
c Matth. xxvi. 41.

deed, not on the hypocrisy and avarice of the man who was on the point of betraying him. "Let [c] her alone: she hath wrought a good work on me. For ye have the poor with you always, and, whenever ye will, ye can do them good: but me ye have not always. She hath done what she had *in her power*: she hath beforehand anointed my body to the embalming." [a] When Jesus, at the paschal supper, privately marked out the traitor to John by giving him a portion of the food before him, he shewed his very great lenity, and even at that time provoked him to repentance by an act which was one way of testifying affection. We may add that, immediately before, he had condescended to wash Judas' feet in common with the other apostles; not angrily repelling him, but obscurely hinting his intended perfidy: "Ye [b] are clean, but not all." And in the very execution of his treason he thus addressed Judas: "[c] Companion, wherefore art thou come?" What end canst thou propose to thyself? and how hath my conduct deserved this from thee? And when, notwithstanding this gentleness, Judas "drew near to him and kissed him," [d] 'making an emblem

d John xii. 4—7: and p. p.
b John xiii. 10.
c Hale's Contemplations, p. 60.
a Grotius on John xiii. 26.
e Matth. xxvi. 50.

of homage and love the signal of scorn and contempt, as well as of treachery and villainy,' our Lord's words were, "Judas, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?" He gave him no upbraiding appellation; but simply declared his knowledge that this seeming mark of benevolence was used for the purpose of discriminating him to those whom his relentless enemies sent to apprehend him.

Observe the mildness of his expostulation, when the *Jews* were about to stone him. "Many [a] good works have I shewn you from my Father: for which of those works do ye stone me?" When the high priest Ananias commanded Paul to be smitten, this great apostle betrayed a warmth which, on recollection, he becomingly retracted: "[b] God shall smite thee, thou whited wall: for sittest thou to judge me after the law, and commandest me to be smitten contrary to the law?" But with what composure does the meek Jesus address the officer who struck him at the same tribunal? "If [in the course of my preaching] I have spoken [c] evil, bear witness of the evil: but if well, why smitest thou me?"

a John x. 32. b Acts xxiii. 3. c John xviii. 23.

Our Lord's meek and placable disposition appeared in the strongest light when he interceded for his murderers, not on a calm foresight of his sufferings, nor 'upon cool consideration after the injury was done,' but at the very time when they were nailing him to the cross; when a sense of the wrong and indignity might naturally have been expressed, and assertions of innocence might naturally have been uttered.

There are occasions indeed when our Lord shewed a becoming sensibility of wrong conduct.

When his disciples rebuked those who brought to him young children, that he might lay his hands on them and pray for them, he was moved with [a] indignation, that the piety of those who brought them, and his own act of benevolence, should be thus interrupted.

When watched by the scribes and pharisees, that they might find matter of accusation against him if he restored a man's withered hand on the sabbath, we read that he looked round on them with [b] anger: but it was an anger mixt with grief and compassion for their hardness of heart; it was a just and generous

a Mark x. 14. b ib. iii. 5.

resentment of their dissembled malevolence, who could think the sabbath profaned by an act of humanity, and sanctified by compassing the death of him who performed it.

There are also instances in our Lord's parables, where anger is not only mentioned as a natural and justifiable effect in the circumstances supposed to exist among men, but is ultimately ascribed to God himself. The king of the wicked servant was reasonably moved with [c] anger against him, because he had no compassion on his fellow servant who owed him an hundred pence, when his lord had forgiven him ten thousand talents. The rejection of the gospel by the Jews was foretold under the following parables: one, of a certain man who made a great supper, and bade many, and who was [a] angry at the rude excuses which all unanimously sent him: another, of a king who made a marriage feast for his son; and, when he had not only suffered the indignity of neglect, but the outrage of having his servants contumeliously treated and slain, was prompted by a just [b] anger to send forth his armies, and destroy those murderers.

c Matth. xvii. 34. a Luke xiv. 21. b Matth. xxii. 7.

When our Lord blasted the barren fig-tree, he pronounced the words, "Let no man eat fruit of thee forever," with his usual majesty and sedateness. His action was not the result of disappointment, because he hungered; but it arose from his fixed attention to convey important truths in the most lively manner. And when Peter observed on the morrow, that the fig-tree, which Jesus had *cursed*, was withered away, he probably used a Hebrew phrase, signifying that the tree had been *destroyed* by Jesus' powerful word.

Our Lord used severe language for the first time, after the scribes and pharisees had attributed his miracles to Satan. But he did not call them evil men, a race of vipers, an evil and adulterous generation, till he had first confuted their blasphemy with great composure and irresistible strength of argument. Then indeed he boldly [a] rebuked them, formidable as their power and authority were. But that his reproofs were not dictated by a sense of personal wrong appears from his own words, "Whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him."

It must be remarked, that our Lord's [b] sharp language to the pharisees, scribes, and teach-

a Matth. xii. 24—39. b Luke xi. 39—52.

ers of the law, while he sat at meat with one of them, was owing to their blasphemy of the Holy Spirit, which had immediately preceded. Upon this account he reproved their rapacious, wicked, and senseless conduct; their neglect of justice and the love of God; their pride and hypocrisy; their violation of the law which they taught; their flagrant inconsistency; and their obstinate rejection of his kingdom, in which a perfect knowledge of salvation was to be obtained, and their strenuous endeavours to exclude others from the glorious privileges offered them.

Let us observe how different his manner of expressing himself was, before the Jews extorted from him this asperity. A woman, who had been a sinner, anointed Jesus' feet, while he was eating bread in the house of a pharisee. "And when the pharisee, who had bidden him, saw it, he spake within himself, saying, This man, if he were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth him: for she is a sinner." Questioning Jesus' knowledge may well seem, to those who consider it apart from the series of the history, a stronger reason for reproof than wondering, as in the last instance, that he did not wash before he partook of food.

But observe the contrast. At this time he thus engaged attention to a mild vindication of himself: "Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee." And when he assured the woman of forgiveness, "and they that sat at meat with him began to say within themselves, Who is this that even forgiveth sins?" he was silent on the disparaging idea, and said to the woman, "Thy faith hath saved thee" from the guilt and punishment of thy sins: "[a] Go in peace." When he was secretly charged with blashemy for pronouncing forgiveness of sins to a paralytick, his mild expostulation was, "[b] Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts?" When the Jews sought to kill him for healing on the sabbath, and calling God his Father, his strongest language to them was, "Ye [c] have not God's word abiding in you." "How can ye believe, who receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour which cometh from the only God?" When his disciples were censured by the pharisees for rubbing and eating ears of corn on the sabbath, [d] he contented himself with shewing, by examples and arguments, that

a Luke vii. 36—50. b Matth. ix. 4. c John v. 38, 44.
d Matth. xii. 1—8.

they condemned the guiltless. And at another time, when the scribes and pharisees insidiously watched his conduct, in order to arraign it if he healed on the sabbath, an [a] indignant look and a firm perseverance in his benevolent purpose sufficed him. In his sermon on the mount he only once named them, when he asserted, with a dispassionate and becoming authority, that greater righteousness than theirs was necessary in his disciples: and in other places of that discourse he avoided [b] express mention of them, when his subject led him to censure their vices.

When a ruler of the synagogue had indignation because Jesus healed on the sabbath, our Saviour, knowing his heart, charged him with an [c] hypocritical zeal for the sabbath, while his object was to stir up the people against Jesus. The man was an enemy to Jesus and his doctrine: but Jesus' reply made him and all his adversaries ashamed.

The charge of [d] hypocrisy was often brought by our Lord against the Jewish rulers: but not till they had filled up the measure of their unbelief and impiety. Then he, who knew the recesses of their hearts, freely exposed the pollution that dwelt there.

a Mark iii. 5. b ib. vi. 2, 5, 16. c Luke xiii. 15, 17.
d Matth. xv. 7. xvi. 3, xxii. 18. xxiii.

At the feast of tabernacles, six months before Jesus' death, the pharisees and chief priests [a] sent officers to apprehend him. The day following they artfully attempted to set him at variance with [b] Moses, when they placed before him a woman taken in adultery. And when these intentional [c] murderers claimed [d] God for their father, the falsehood of the pretension seems to have animated his zeal like the profanation of the temple; and he answered, "Ye are not of God," "Ye [e] are of your father the devil," and in seeking my life ye are desirous to execute such devices as your father always conceived. For "he was a murderer from the beginning," and, to compass his purpose on the first progenitors of the human race, "abode not in the truth," but seduced them by falsehoods. And when the Jews thus replied, "Say [f] we not well that thou art a Samaritan, and hast a demon?" and again, "Now we know that thou hast a demon:" it was in reference to these words that he said, "Ye know not the Father, but I know him: and if I should say that I know him not, I should speak [g] falsely, like you."

a John vii. 32. b ib. viii. 5. c 37. d 41.
e 44. f 48, 52. g 55.

In our Saviour's last [a] address to the scribes and pharisees, every one must be struck with the severity of his reproofs. He called them hypocrites, fools, and blind; serpents, a race of vipers, and sons of hell: their ostentation, pride, love of spiritual dominion, extortion, and murderous disposition, were represented by him in the keenest terms, and with the liveliest energy. But his reprehensions were, if I may so speak, the commissioned lightning of heaven, directed against the worst of men masked under the appearance of superiour sanctity. Christ was an inspired prophet, and a searcher of the reins and heart: and those whom he reproved sought to murder him; and blasphemed the Holy Spirit, contrary to intuitive evidence. His rebukes were stern, but just; indignant, but dictated by virtuous indignation; earnest and vehement, but the grave language of insulted majesty, of perfect goodness detesting vice, and of perfect knowledge penetrating all its disguises and aggravations. The [b] men and their vices were distinguished; and their punishment was tenderly [c] deplored while it was denounced.

a Matth. xxiii. b verse 3. c 37, 8.

Let us now observe how our Lord's censures of his disciples were circumstanced. When Peter, in the name of the other apostles, asked him about the position which he had advanced, "Not that which entereth into the mouth defileth a man, but that which goeth out of the mouth;" he replied, "Are ye also [a] still without understanding?" after so long an intercourse with me, and such repeated instructions? It was expedient to quicken their attention; lest, like the Jews, hearing, they should not hear, and seeing, they should not see. When our Lord foretold his many sufferings, and Peter rebuked him, Jesus turned himself about, and when he had surveyed his disciples in such a manner as to fix their attention, he thus sharply [b] animadverted on Peter, Remove from my sight, thou adversary of God and man: thou art an impediment to the reception of my religion: for thy conceptions are not suitable to the plan of God's providence, but to the expectations of worldly minded men. It was necessary to teach the apostles not to be [c] ashamed of a crucified Saviour, to correct their prejudices in an awak-

a Matth. xv. 16. b Matth. xvi. 23. c Mark viii. 38.

ening manner, and to check the ambitious desire of secular pre-eminence which clave to them so strongly. But this was an exercise of authority without anger: for, six days after, Jesus distinguished Peter by admitting him among the witnesses of his [d] transfiguration, and of the voice which addressed him from the excellent glory. Again: on the evening of his resurrection, our Lord appeared to the eleven, and "[e] upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not those who had seen him after he was risen." And he thus began his reply to the two disciples who went to Emmaus on the day of his resurrection: "O [f] inconsiderate, and slow of heart to believe all which the prophets have spoken!" But our Lord's censures of his friends and of his enemies were wholesome admonitions or authoritative corrections: and were uttered by one who had a supernatural knowledge that they were deserved. A prophet is sent for reproof as well as instruction; and can alone give both unerringly.

Many, who are superiour to the mean and detestable vice of intemperance, and can re-

d Matth. xvii. 1. 2 Pet. i. 16—18. e Mark xvi. 14.
f Luke xxiv. 25.

strain their sensual desires in general, have much to learn in the art of governing their angry passions. Let them take both instruction and encouragement from the conduct of Jesus under various species of provocation. He was a striking example of that quiet and gentle temper which is slow to take and to give offence; which is not easily kindled into anger, and never seeks revenge; and which inclines us to act the mild and friendly part to all, both friends and enemies. He exhibited that virtue, which stands opposed not only to wrath, but to pride, stubbornness, moroseness, austerity, peevishness, and ill nature. Particularly, he who said "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you;" he, who uttered these words, expressed all their spirit in his life. "He loved his enemies with an ardour which all their cruelty could not extinguish. He blessed, with the warmest devotion, those that, with the severest bitterness, cursed him. He did the greatest good that benevolence could do to them that hated him with all the virulence that malignity can feel. Who, without veneration, can behold a man, in whom all the indignities and cruelties, which

it was in the power of his enemies to heap upon him, were able to excite no other feeling, relative to them, than pity. Who, without amazement, can contemplate a being, as susceptible of pain as any of us, under all the agonies of crucifixion, and in the midst of popular reproaches, more pointed and piercing than the nails that transfixed his limbs, or the spear that penetrated his side, employing the last gasp which his enemies have left him, in uttering a prayer for their forgiveness, and an apology for their crime!

To return good for evil is indeed the most difficult task which we have to perform, and one from which we might have been tempted to have excused ourselves by a plea of incapacity, did not the religion, which requires it of us, place in our view an example of this virtue, exercised under circumstances more adapted to excite resentment, than any, in which we are ever called to act.

To that summit of charity and generosity which our great preceptor in morals and religion calls upon us to endeavour to climb, he has himself ascended. He does not stand at the bottom of the hill, and content himself with pointing to the top, saying, "go up yon-

der :" it is from the height of goodness that he exhorts mankind to mount up into elevated benevolence ; and he is as much our forerunner in moral ascension, as in a resurrection from the grave, and in a passage to heaven."

SECT. VIII.

Of our Lord's Humility.

"He that humbleth himself shall be exalted," is among our Lord's [a] favourite maxims: and he has declared that "[b] whosoever shall humble himself as a little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven."

We shall obtain a right idea of christian humility by observing, that the sacred writers oppose it to [c] pride and [d] vain glory; that it consists in not thinking more [e] highly of ourselves than we ought to think, and disposes us to [f] prefer one another in honour, and to maintain such sobriety in our self love, and such candour towards others, as readily to [g] esteem wise and good men wiser and better than ourselves.

This eminent christian virtue is rarely recommended in heathen writers, though its opposite vices are often condemned. Our Lord was himself an illustrious example of humility. [h] And "let the same mind be in us which was also in Christ Jesus: who, being in the form

a Luke xiv. 11. xviii. 14. Matth. xxiii. 12. b Matth. xviii. 4.
c James iv. 6. d Phil. ii. 3. e Rom. xii. 3. f ib. 10,
g Phil. ii. 3. h Phil. ii. 5—8.

of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God, [did not covet to be like God, or seize on the divine resemblance as a prey:] but emptied himself, and took on him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of man; and, when found in fashion as a man, he *humbled* himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." And in another place, our Lord's act of humiliation in leaving the bosom of his Father is thus beautifully used as an argument for a liberal relief of the Jewish christians by the church of Corinth: "Ye [a] know the [abundant] bounty [and munificence] of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich."

Let us particularly consider our Lord's humility, after his assumption of human nature.

Though a descendant of king David, he was born of obscure parents; and though the place of his nativity was Bethleem, the city of David, yet he dwelt so long in Nazareth as to be called the [b] inhabitant of a city which was held in mean [c] estimation, and was in a [d] prov-

a 2 Cor. viii. 9. b Mark xiv. 67. c John i. 46.
d ib. vii. 52.

ince out of which arose no prophet. "He [d] grew up as a root out of a dry ground; he had no form nor comeliness, that we should behold him; nor appearance, that we should desire him."

When he entered on his ministry, "he [e] chose the foolish things of the world to confound wise men, and the weak things of the world to confound the things which were mighty." His apostles were men of inferiour birth and occupations. And for this choice many wise reasons are discoverable: but at present we only observe, that it illustrates our Lord's lowliness of mind; who thus characterised his gospel, that it was preached to the [a] poor; and who repeatedly made it a ground of thanksgiving to God, that his converts were men of an humble class; not scribes and teachers of the law, who were wise and prudent in their own conceit, and in the eye of the world, but men of low attainments and stations, [b] babes in human knowledge, but babes also in vice.

And how did our Lord conduct himself to these obscure men whom he chose? He was among them as one that [c] ministered. He

d Isai. lii. 2. e 1 Cor. i. 27. a Matth. xi. 5.
b Matth. xi. 25. Luke x. 21. c Luke xxii. 27.

set them an example of condescension by performing the menial office of [b] washing their feet: agreeably to the manner in which he speaks of himself, that he "[c] came, not to be ministered unto, but to minister;" and to his exhortation, "He [d] that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger: and he that is chief, as he that ministereth."

There was also the greatest condescension in his general behaviour. We read that he instructed a [e] woman of Samaria, and at the request of the Samaritans, remained two days in one of their cities; that he said to the messengers of a Roman centurion, whose servant lay sick at a distance, I [f] will come and heal him; that he sat at meat in Levi's house with [g] many publicans and sinners; that he ate bread at different times with [h] pharisees; that he thus addressed [i] Zaccheus, a chief of the publicans, This day I must abide in thy house; and that he took [k] young children in his arms, laid his hands on them, and blessed them.

His mind was not raised by the power of working miracles. The idea of the glory

b John xiii. c Matth. xx. 28. d Luke xxii. 26. This verse and the 27th refer to the act of washing the feet of the disciples. e John iv. f Matth. viii.
g ib. ix. 10. h Luke vii. 36. xi. 37. xiv. 1.
i ib. xix. 5. k Mark x. 16.

which redounded to himself from so splendid a gift seemed to be wholly banished. When of ten lepers cleansed by him only one turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God, and also fell down on his face at Jesus' feet, giving him thanks; his remark was, "There are not found that returned to give [l] glory to God, save this stranger." He loses all consideration of himself at such seasons. "Return [m] to thine house," said he to the demoniack of Gadara, "and relate what things God hath done unto thee."

It has been remarked, [n] that there was no superfluous display of power in our Lord's miracles; that he sometimes [o] forbad divulging them, partly from the principle of humility; and that he refused the [p] personal attendance of some who had been healed by him, rejecting such a proud attestation to his mighty works. Indeed, during one of his progresses about Galilee, certain women accompanied him who had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities: but a reason is assigned; that they ministered to our Lord and to his [q] apostles of their substance.

l Luke xvii. 18. m Ib. viii. 39. n P. i. c. iii. sect. 2. p. 278. o Ib. sect. 3. p. 302.
p P. i. c. iii. sect. 3. p. 303, 5. q Luke viii. 3.

He did not attract the notice of him who presided at the marriage feast, and of the guests, when he wrought his first miracle in Cana of Galilee. The [r] servants only, who drew the water, were immediate witnesses to its miraculous change into wine. The miracle was left to proclaim itself.

When he restored the lame man at the pool of Bethesda, he immediately [s] withdrew himself, a multitude being in the place.

When he raised Jairus's daughter, he [t] suffered none to enter into the house, but Peter, James, and John, and the father and mother of the damsel.

When two blind men followed him as he was passing from Jairus's house in Capernaum, he restored not their sight publickly in the city, but delayed touching their eyes till he entered into Matthew's [u] house.

When he opened the ears and loosed the tongue of one that was deaf and had an impediment in his speech, he took him [w] aside from the multitude.

He charged Peter, James, and John not to [x] disclose his transfiguration to any one, till he should rise from the dead: and afterwards he

r John ii. 9. s Ib. v. 13. t Luke viii. 51.
u Matth. ix. 27—30. w Mark vii. 33. x Matth. xvii. 9.

made these very apostles, who saw his majesty on the holy mountain, the sole witnesses of his agony in the garden of Gethsemane.

At another time he hastened to heal a demoniack dreadfully afflicted, because [y] he saw that the multitude was running together.

When ten lepers implored his compassion, he said to them, "Go, [z] shew yourselves unto the priests:" an indirect and humble way of pronouncing them whole.

Knowing, however, that miracles were the seal of heaven to his divine mission, he sometimes brought them forth to view, that they might work a proper degree of conviction. When the [a] woman, who had laboured under an issue of blood twelve years, came behind while the multitude was thronging and pressing him, and touched the hem of his garment, under a full persuasion that by this act she should be healed, and instantly perceived her recovery; Jesus, who knew within himself the power which had proceeded from him, consigned not the wonderful transaction to silence and oblivion, but caused the woman to discover the whole of it to his disciples and to the multitude. Again: when he fed about

y Mark iv. 25. z Luke xvii. 14. a Mark v. 25

five thousand men, besides women and children, with five loaves and two fishes, he said to his disciples, "Gather together the fragments which remain, that nothing be lost. They therefore gathered them together, and filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley loaves which remained unto them that had eaten." And besides the distribution of these fragments among the multitude to serve them on the way, which seems to be the force of the reason given for collecting them, our Lord might further design to impress on his disciples the reality and greatness of the miracle; a conduct which their [c] hardened heart made too necessary.

And it is probable that our Lord [d] inquired the name of the Gadarene demoniack, knowing that he would answer, "My name is Legion, for we are many;" and designing to illustrate the greatness of his power in healing so malignant a disorder.

We must also remark, that our Saviour willingly yielded the superiority to his disciples in the magnitude and splendour of their respective miracles; not speaking with

c Mark viii. 17, 19. d Mark v. 9.

tongues as they did, nor communicating spiritual gifts so largely and generally. "He, that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and[e] greater works than these shall he do, because I go to my Father."

We must further observe with regard to his miracles, that he humbly ascribed them to his Father. "The[f] works which the Father hath given me to finish,...bear witness of me." "The[g] Father, who dwelleth in me, he doeth the works."

Many were the occasions on which our Lord chose rather to benefit his hearers than to display his boundless *knowledge*. And though his prophecies were so many and so precise as fully to prove his divine mission, yet were they introduced in the most natural manner; and, as I have before observed, many important events relating to his church, were left to be foretold by his apostles after the effusion of the Spirit. That most remarkable prophecy, in which the destruction of Jerusalem was so circumstantially foretold, was delivered to Peter, James, John, and Andrew[h] apart on the mount of Olives.

e John xiv. 12. f Ib. v. 36. g Ib. xiv. 10.
h Mark xiii. 3.

There is also much humility in our Lord's manner of referring his doctrine to his Father. "My [i] doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me." "As [k] my Father hath taught me, I speak these things." "The [l] word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's who sent me."

When he had miraculously fed a great multitude, and their language was, "This [m] is truly that prophet who should come into the world," he *constrained* his disciples, by uncommon earnestness of persuasion, to enter into a ship and go before him to the other side of the lake: and it is probable that the prejudices of the disciples made them unwilling to comply, when they had heard from so many an acknowledgment of their master's prophetical character, and perhaps expected from them the strongest marks of their attachment. The reason of our Lord's conduct is manifest. He knew that the people were about to come and take him by force to make him a king; and therefore he dismissed his apostles, commanded the multitude to disperse, and retired to a mountain himself alone.

i John vii. 16. k C. viii. 28. l C. xiv. 24. See also c. xii. 49, 50. xiv. 10.

m John vi. 14. See verse 15: and Matth. xii. 23.

Our Lord sought not [n] his own glory, but his that sent him. He received not testimony [o] or honour from men; but deemed them of no account when compared with the witness and approbation of God. He particularly [p] taught his followers to avoid ostentation in religious duties; and assured them that if, in the performance of such actions, their end was the praise of men, they had their reward. His expostulation with the Jewish rulers was, "How [q] can ye believe, who receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour which cometh from the only God?" Their crime consisted in their undue estimation of human honour, and in their comparative disregard to so high and noble an object as the praise of God. They did "all their works to be seen of men;" and "sought the praise of men more than the praise of God." But our Lord sometimes mentioned the praise of men as a natural and desirable attendant on right actions: for he knew that we could not be insensible to worldly reputation, and that our pursuit of it was to be wisely [r] regulated, and not forbidden. He placed it among the mo-

n John vii. 18. o C. v. 34, 41.
p Matth. vi. 1—6. q John v. 44.
r See Prov. xxii. 1. Eccles. vii. 1. Rom. xiv. 18. Phil. iv. 8. 1 Tim. iii. 7.

tives to humility; "When thou art bidden to a marriage feast, go and sit down in the lowest place; that, when he that bade thee cometh, he may say unto thee, Friend, go up higher: then shalt thou [s] have honour in the presence of them that sit at meat with thee." And when Mary anointed him with very precious ointment, he not only called it a good work, but added, "Verily I say unto you, wheresoever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world, there shall also that, which this woman hath done, be told for a [t] memorial of her." He taught us the value of just praise by bestowing it on the faith of the [u] Samaritan leper, of [w] the blind near Jericho, of the [x] centurion, of the [y] woman who had been a sinner, of the Syrophœnician [z] woman, and of [a] her who was persuaded that she should be healed if she only touched the hem of his garment: by commending and distinguishing Peter for confessing him to be the [b] Christ, by [c] extolling the charity of the widow who cast two mites into the treasury, and by [d] passing a di-

s Luke xiv. 10.
t Matth. xxvi. 10, 13.
u Luke xvii. 18.
w ib. xviii. 42.
x Matth. viii. 10.
y Luke vii. 50.
z Matth. xv. 28.
a Mark v. 34.
b Matth. xvi. 16—19.
c Mark xii. 43, 4.
d John i. 47. See Tillotson's sermon on the last text. fol. p. 8.

rect and high encomium on the character of Nathanael, Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no guile.

When our Lord spake of himself, there is often a striking delicacy. "I have sent you to reap that whereon ye have not laboured; [e] *others have laboured*, and ye are entered into their labours." "I say unto you, that in this place is [f] *somewhat greater* than the temple." Substitute the first person instead of the humble periphrasis in the following passages among many other, and the difference will be very perceptible: "Hereafter ye shall see heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of man." "The Son of man is lord even of the sabbath day." "The Son of man shall send forth his angels." "The Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father, with his angels."

It was humility, as well as piety, that led him to make and to repeat the following remark: "Whosoever shall [g] speak a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but unto him that blasphemeth against the Holy Spirit it shall not be forgiven." And, actuated by the same principles, when

e John iv. 38. f Matth xii. 6.
g Luke xii. 10. Matth. xii. 31.

one asked him, "Good master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?" he thus introduced his reply: "Why [l] callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God."

A learned writer has ingeniously suggested that the mission of the seventy took place shortly before the feast of tabernacles; and that "perhaps our Lord dismissed his train partly with a view to travel with less appearance of ostentation." When, on the return of the seventy, he had occasion to speak magnificently of the gospel, *he turned him to his disciples, and said privately*, "[l] Blessed are the eyes which see the things that ye see: for I tell you, that many prophets and kings have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them."

Once indeed he [m] intimated to Peter his royal descent from David. This circumstance was well known to the apostles and to other Jews; for he was often addressed by the appellation of the Son of David. And I

[l] Mark x. 17, 18.
[l] Luke x. 23, 4. [m] Matth. xvii. 25.

think that our Lord alludes to the fact on account of the prophecies relating to it.

There are times also, when he asserts his high and inconceivable dignity. "Dost thou believe on the [n] Son of God?" "The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son [o] of God; and they that hear shall live." With respect to assertions of this kind it is sufficient to say, that our Lord came into the world that he might bear [p] witness to the truth; however he might be [q] blasphemed and persecuted for advancing it. He likewise appealed to the excellence of his moral character. "[r] Learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart." "I do [s] always those things that please the Father." "Which of you convinceth [t] me of sin?" "I am the [u] good shepherd." Here we must observe that one design of Jesus' coming into the world was to set men a perfect example. It was therefore suitable to his peculiar circumstances as a prophet, to turn the eyes of men towards his disposition and actions. The three last passages occur immediately after our Lord, notwithstanding his many great and

n John ix. 35. o C. v. 25. See also c. x. 36. xi. 4.
p John xviii. 37. q ib. x. 31, 33, 6.
r Matth. xi. 29. s John viii. 29. t ver. 46.
u C. x. 11.

good actions, had been traduced as [w] an impostor and demoniack, and the Jewish rulers had sought his life. In such circumstances a vindication of himself was just, and shewed a becoming magnanimity and sense of dignity. But we should remember his own words, [x] that, if he had borne witness of himself without further witness, his witness would not have been sufficient and admissible. Whereas, though he [y] bare witness of himself, his witness *was* true; because he had an heavenly embassy to announce, and because the [z] Father, who sent him, bare witness of him.

But when our Lord spake of his personal dignity in the most exalted language, and [a] called God his Father, he added, "The Son can do nothing of himself;" and when, immediately afterwards, he foretold that all, who were in the [b] graves, should hear his voice, and should come forth, he repeated the humble acknowledgment, "I can [c] of mine own self do nothing."

Nor does this humility forsake him at any time. After his resurrection, when the glories of heaven were directly in his view, he

w John vii. 12, 20, 30.
x John v. 31.
y John viii. 14.
z ver. 18.
a John v. 17, 18.
b ver. 28, 29.
c ver. 19, 30.

used this condescending language, "Go to my [d] *brethren*, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and unto my God and your God."

When he appeared from heaven to St. Paul, he thus addressed him, "I [e] am Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou persecutest."

And what are his words when he describes himself on the [f] throne of his glory, and surrounded by all his holy angels, at the day of judgment? "Inasmuch as ye have done [a beneficent action] unto one of the least of these my [g] *brethren*, ye have done it unto me."

Having such an example in our Lord and Master, let us be clothed with humility. Let us wear it as an outer and inner garment. We cannot feel the power of religion and yet be proud. All its doctrines and representations, its precepts and sanctions are designed to "hide pride from man." Whosoever, saith Christ, shall humble himself as a little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven. It is obvious how strongly the virtue of humility is inculcated and recommended in the sacred scriptures. It is connected with all

d John xx. 17. e Acts xxii. 8.
f Matth. xxv. 31. g ver. 40.

the other duties of a christian. It is necessary alike to faith and to obedience; to faith, because it disposes men to receive instruction, to yield to reason; and when there is sufficient evidence that a doctrine comes from God, to believe it; to obedience, because a proud, unbroken spirit says, Who is Lord over me? and refuses to inquire, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? Many are the duties relating to our fellow-men, which none but the humble can be expected to discharge. A haughty temper will not comport with our becoming all things to all men, that we may gain some, with pleasing our neighbour for his good to edification, with bearing all things, with the forgiveness of injuries, with condescension to the weaknesses and humours of others; and to the meanest offices, by which we can render ourselves useful. If we are destitute of humility, we have the rudiments of our religion yet to learn. We cannot better judge of our spiritual and moral state, than by the progress which we make in this virtue. Do we grow in knowledge and in pride at the same time? we lose more in goodness than we can possibly gain by the enlargement of our views. Do we seem to improve in many excellencies of the virtuous man and devout

christian, and yet outstrip that improvement in self opinion, we make those qualities nothing in the sight of God, which would otherwise be valuable. The better we are, the more we become sensible of our defect in holiness, as the wiser we are, the more fully we perceive our ignorance.

If we will attain to humility, it must be seated in our hearts. To no purpose do we maintain a modest exterior, observe a condescending carriage, and utter lowly words, if God, who searches the inmost mind, sees pride reigning under our fair disguises, and knows our "goodly seeming" to be a veil for a haughty and usurping spirit.

SECT. IX.

Of our Lord's Fortitude.

Our Lord exhorted his apostles not to [a] fear their persecutors, who killed the body and could not kill the soul: but rather to fear him who was able to destroy both body and soul in hell. This was an exhortation to fortitude in *professing* and *propagating* the true religion. His example taught this duty in its whole extent.

He shewed a noble contempt of *worldly greatness*, by appearing in a low condition of life. During his publick ministry he had not [b] where to lay his head, some of his pious attendants [c] ministered to him of their substance, and he paid the tribute money by miracle. He suffered hunger, thirst, and weariness; he was ever contending with the dulness of his disciples, the incredulity of his kinsfolk, and the reproaches and injuries of the Jews. And he [d] "pleased not himself;" but submitted to many and great evils, that he might please God and benefit mankind.

a Matt. x. 26, 28. b ib. viii. 20. c Luke viii. 3.
d Matth. xvii. 27. e Rom. xv. 3.

Let us observe in particular instances what "[f] *contradiction of sinners*" he endured, and what greatness of mind he displayed.

When he pronounced forgiveness of sins to a paralytick, some of the scribes and pharisees charged him with blasphemy for invading God's prerogative. But they made the accusation in the reasonings of their hearts; and did not avow it openly. Notwithstanding this, Jesus, unawed by their authority, [g] firmly but calmly expostulated with them for their evil thought; and argued that the discernment of a man's moral state might justly be allowed to Him whom God had vested with the power of working miracles.

Having healed a man on the sabbath, who had laboured under an infirmity for thirty and eight years, the Jews persecuted him, and sought to kill him. Jesus answered, "My [h] Father worketh hitherto, and I work:" My Father preserves, governs and benefits the world without distinction of days; and therefore I also extend good to men on the sabbath. This mode of expressing himself furnished the Jews with an additional reason for seeking his life. Observe now throughout the whole of the discourse immediately following, with what mag-

f Heb. xii. 3. g Mark ii. 6—11. h John v. 17.

nanimity our Lord perseveres in the same language. "The [i] Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the *Father* do." "[k] The *Father* loveth the Son, and sheweth him all things which he himself doeth." The [l] *Father* judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son: that all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the *Father*."

Probably on the sabbath after he had restored the lame man at the pool of Bethesda, our Lord intrepidly [m] vindicated his disciples against the Pharisees, who had censured them for plucking and eating ears of corn on that day. And, thinking it expedient to wean the Jews from their excessive veneration for the law which he was about to abolish, on the sabbath [n] which next succeeded, though the scribes and pharisees watched him, he healed a man with a withered hand publickly in the synagogue. This filled them with madness; and they took counsel how they might destroy him.

Afterwards, as he was teaching in one of the synagogues on [o] the sabbath, he restored a woman who had been bowed together

i John v. 19. k 20. l 22, 24. So 21, 26, 30, 36, 37, 43, 45.
m Luke vi. 1—4. n ib. 6—11. o Luke xiii. 10—17.

eighteen years, confuted the ruler of the synagogue who with indignation restrained the people from coming to be healed on the sabbath, reproved his hypocrisy, as he concealed many vices under this semblance of piety, and made all his adversaries ashamed.

Again: as he was eating bread with a ruler of the pharisees on the [p] sabbath, and those of that powerful sect insidiously observed his conduct, a man with a dropsy stood before them. Jesus said to the teachers of the law and the pharisees, Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath day? Knowing how invincibly he reasoned on this point, they kept silence. But Jesus "took him, and healed him, and sent him away." Conscious of his rectitude, he was fearless of their power.

Once more: at the feast of tabernacles, though it was the [q] sabbath, Jesus made clay and opened the eyes of one blind from his birth: and [r] he wrought this miracle immediately after the Jews had taken up stones to cast at him, and had sent officers to apprehend him.

There are other instances which shew that Jesus paid no deference to the wrong notions of the leading Jews. The scribes and pharisees murmured because he ate with [s] publicans

p Luke xiv. 1—6. q John ix. 14. r See c. vii, viii, ix. s Luke v. 30.

and sinners in the house of Matthew the publican. This censure did not deter him from saying to Zaccheus, a chief of the [t] publicans, at a time when multitudes surrounded him, This day I must abide in thine house.

Another proof of our Lord's fortitude was, that, although his first preaching at Nazareth had exposed his [u] life to danger, he was not deterred from attempting their conversion a [w] second time.

We have seen how undauntedly he *reproved* his enemies on just occasions; and these were often the Jewish rulers, who had his life in their power.

He met death for the wisest and best ends, the glory of God and the salvation of mankind. He [y] astonished his timid disciples by the readiness with which he went before them in the way to Jerusalem, on the approach of the passover at which he suffered; when they all knew that his enemies were all conspiring against his life; and he himself knew that he should suffer a most painful and ignominious death; he entered the city in a kind of publick triumph: in the [a] hearing of the multitude he

t Luke xix. 1—7.
u ib. iv. 29.
w Mark vi. 1—6.
y Mark x. 32. Luke xix. 28.
a Matth. xxiii. 1.

reproved the vices of the scribes and pharisees to their face, with unequalled energy, and with words "[b] quick, and powerful, and sharper than a two-edged sword:" when Judas rose from the paschal supper to betray him, he said to his disciples, with wonderful composure, "Now [c] is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified through him:" he witnessed before the high-priest, and before Pontius Pilate, a good confession; and shewed that he voluntarily submitted to death, because he had miraculously preserved his life at the preceding feasts of tabernacles and dedication.

Here it is natural to inquire how far our Saviour's agony was consistent with that fortitude which is ascribed to him. Let us consider it with the attention which it demands.

We read that our Lord often foretold his sufferings, and many particulars of them; that he most sharply [d] rebuked Peter for wishing them far from him; and that, when Moses and Elias appeared to him at his transfiguration, they spake of his [e] departure which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem. He likewise knew that, according to the ancient

b Hebr. iv. 12. c John xiii. 31.
d Matth. xvi. 22, 23. e Luke ix. 31.

[f] prophecies, the Messiah ought to suffer what the Jews inflicted, and to enter into his [g] glory: and accordingly he predicted his [h] resurrection on the third day, his [i] ascension into heaven, and his elevation to his glorious throne. Undoubtedly our Lord, who was in the bosom of the Father, had a large and perfect view of this and every other plan of God's moral government.

On the other hand, we must consider, that Jesus Christ, though in union with God, was perfect man, and left men an [k] exampie that they should follow his steps. He partook of flesh and blood, like the children given him by the common Father of all. "In all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest." He said to his apostles, "Ye are they who have continued with me in my *temptations*." "He was in all points *tempted* like as we are, yet without sin;" that he might be touched with the feeling of our infirmities. He himself was "[l] compassed with infirmity;" that he might pardon the igno-

f Mark ix. 12. John iii. 14. Luke xviii. 31. xxii. 37. John xii. 3, 3. xix. 28.
g John xvii. 24. Matth. xix. 28. xxv. 31.
h Matth. xx. 19. i John vi. 62.
k 1 Pet. ii. 21. l Hebr. v. 2.

rant and erroneous, and be moderately and not rigorously affected towards them.

We must also carefully remark of him, that he possessed the most exquisite feelings of human nature in the highest degree. He was susceptible of [m] joy, which instantly burst forth in devout thanksgiving. He was prone to compassion, and repeatedly melted into tears. The innocence of children engaged his affection: his heart was open to the impressions of friendship; and when he saw any degree of virtue he [n] loved it. He was grieved at unbelief, and had a generous indignation against vice: and we find him touched with the quickest sense of his own wrongs: "Are [o] ye come out as against a thief, with swords and staves, to take me?"

Sometimes he spake of his sufferings with the greatest sensibility. "I have a baptism to be baptised with: and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!" "Now is my soul troubled: and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour. But for this cause came I unto this hour."

It is true that he frequently foretold his death with much composure; and that he

m Matth. xi. 25. Luke x. 21.
n Mark x. 21.
o Matth. xxvi. 55.

sternly reprehended Peter, when, from worldly views, that apostle began to [p] rebuke him for uttering one of these predictions.

The horrour of the sharpest sufferings which can be undergone will sometimes be greater, and sometimes less, in the firmest and best minds; as the evil is considered in its own nature, or under the idea of duty and resignation to God. The contest between reason and religion, and the natural dread of the greatest evils, must subsist when the most perfect virtue is called on to suffer them: and where it ends in a becoming resolution, and a pious submission to the wise and great Disposer of all events, the character is a consummate one in a moral and religious view.

Let us now turn our eyes to our Lord's conduct on the night before his crucifixion. Nothing can exceed the sedateness, the wisdom, and benevolence, which appear throughout the whole of it at the celebration of the paschal supper. He first [q] gently censured the contention for superiority which had arisen among the apostles. He then illustrated his doctrine of humility by an example of it, in washing their feet. He proceeded to declare

p Mark viii. 32. q Luke xxii. 25, &c.

with much [r] emotion his knowledge of Judas's ungrateful and perfidious intention; he mentioned the aggravations and the dreadful consequences of his guilt; but described the traitor covertly, and addressed him obscurely, till compelled by Judas's own question to point him out publickly. He exhorted his disciples to mutual [s] love with a paternal affection. In consequence of Peter's declared self-confidence, he foretold his fall; but when Peter vehemently [t] repeated his asseveration, our Lord did not repeat his prediction. He instituted a most simple, expressive, and useful rite in commemoration of his death; instructed, advised, and comforted his disciples with the most unbounded affection; and closed with a solemn act of [u] piety, as striking a scene as imagination can conceive, of lowliness and benignity, of prudence and wisdom, of decorum and majesty, of composure and resignation.

He then resorted to his accustomed place of retirement, and where he knew that Judas would execute his treason: for he [w] knew all things which should befal him.

r John xiii. 21.
s ver. 34.
t Matth. xxvi. 35.
u John xvii.
w John xviii. 4.

We shall now inquire what were the causes of that agony and deadly sorrow, of that sore amazement and heavy anguish, which seized him on the approach of his sufferings; and which drew from him such intense and persevering supplications that God would avert them.

It cannot be supposed that he was penetrated with a sense of God's indignation towards him at this time. That is the portion of those only who do evil. A voice from heaven repeatedly pronounced our Lord the beloved Son of God, in whom he was wellpleased. And he was now about to evidence his [a] obedience and love to his Father in a most illustrious manner. He was also about to [b] sanctify himself for the sake of his disciples, and of all mankind. And what are his own words? "Therefore doth my Father [c] *love* me, because I lay down my life that I may take it again."

Nor was Christ at this time, in a literal sense, under the immediate power of Satan. In the concluding scenes of his life, the evil one might be said to "bruise [d] his heel," because he afflicted him by his instruments. After the temptation the devil is said to depart

a John xiv. 31. b ib. xvii. 19. Matth. xx. 28. xxvi. 28. 1 Cor. v. 14. c John x. 17. d Gen. iii. 15.

from him, "for [e] a season." If the phrase implies that he returned during our Lord's agony and sufferings, what his emisaries and imitators did may be attributed to his agency. When our Lord said to his apostles at the paschal supper, "The [f] prince of this world cometh;" the meaning is, that he was coming by those unjust and violent men, who resembled him. And again, when Jesus said to the Jewish rulers, "This is your [g] hour, and the power of darkness;" he meant the power of wickedness, of men who hated the light, and came not to it lest their deeds should be reproved. But that the mind of Christ was now disquieted and harassed by Satan himself, is a horrid idea, the dictate of gloomy minds, and wholly inconsistent with God's goodness to the Son [h] of his love.

Nor was he oppressed and overcome by the sense that he was to bear [i] the sins of mankind in his own body on the tree; and to [k] redeem us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us. A foresight of conferring unspeakable benefits on the human race would tend to alleviate, and not to embitter, the sufferings of the benevolent Jesus: unless

e Luke iv. 13.
f John xiv. 30.
g Luke xxii. 53.
h Colloss. i. 13.
i 1 Peter ii. 24.
k Gal. iii. 13.

at this time he was [judicially] [a] stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted: an idea which the prophet excludes; and which his own sinless rectitude, and God's perfect goodness, exclude. Though God had wise reasons for not restraining those who afflicted our Lord, yet he was so far from heightening his afflictions above their natural course, that he sent an angel from heaven to strengthen him. Jesus suffered by the wickedness of men; but he was not punished by the hand of God. Nor should his death, and the bitter circumstances preceding it, be considered as a full compensation to strict justice; but as God's merciful and gracious method of reconciling man to himself.

Those persons seem to entertain the most just and rational notions, who do not think that our Lord's broken and dejected spirit was a trial supernaturally induced; but assign natural causes for the feelings which shook his inmost frame. He felt for the wickedness and madness of those who persecuted him in so unrelenting a manner, notwithstanding his beneficent conduct, his laborious and admirable instructions, and the convincing evidences of

[a] Isai. liii. 4.

his divine mission; for the irresolution, timidity, and despondency of his friends, and for the ingratitude, perfidy, and guilt of the wretched and devoted Judas. He foresaw the unjust offence which his death on the cross would give both to Jews and gentiles; the exemplary destruction of his country; the spirit of hatred and persecution which would arise against his church, and even among those who were called by his name; and the unbelief and sins of mankind, which exposed them to such a weight of punishment here and hereafter. And these and such like painful sensations and gloomy prospects, made the deepest impression at a time, when he had a lively view of the immediate indignities and insults, of the disgrace, and horrid pains of death, which awaited him during the long and sharp trial of his wisdom and goodness.

When he came to the place where a follower and friend was to betray him, and where the Jews were ignominiously to seize and bind him as a malefactor, the scene excited a perturbation of mind, and he was depressed by sorrow and anguish proportioned to his exquisite sensibility, the consciousness of his wrongs, and his extensive foresight.

And how did our Lord act under the extreme sorrow which overwhelmed him: He offered up the following prayer to his Father: "My Father, [y] all things which are fit and right are possible with thee: if it be possible, if the wise plan of thy moral government admit of it, let this bitter and deadly cup pass from me: nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt. If this cup of pain and torture cannot pass from me, but that I drink it, thy will be done." He thrice addressed himself to his Father in words of the same import. And being in an agony, having the prospect of an excruciating death immediately before him, he prayed the more intensely: and his body was so affected by the state of his mind, that drops exuded from him, the copiousness of which bore resemblance to drops of blood. The author of the epistle to the Hebrews observes that he "[a] offered up prayers and supplications to him who was able to save him from death, with a strong cry and with [b] tears; and was heard" from the filial reverence with which he prayed. God administered to him extraordinary consolation. But thus far only

y Matth. xxvi. 36. &c. and parallel passages.
a Heb. v. 7. b Luke xxii. 43.

his supplications availed. For the cup of death was not removed from him.

Of this scene our Lord intended to make three of his apostles witnesses: for he advanced only a small distance from them, and the moon was full. But they slept through sorrow; contrary to their Master's commands, ever given for the gravest reasons, and which should have been particularly obeyed in such circumstances. At the close of it he said, The design for which I separated you from my other disciples being ended, "[a] sleep on now, and take your rest." On uttering these words, he heard the approach of those who came to apprehend him, and immediately added, "It is [b] enough: the hour is come: behold the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners: Rise, let us advance: behold, he who betrayeth me is at hand."

Here some observations are necessary.

The [c] captain of our salvation, who was made perfect through sufferings, set a most useful example to his followers who were doomed to undergo the same fiery trial. He gave them no lesson of a proud and stoical

a Matth. xxvi. 45. b Mark xiv. 41.
c Heb. ii. 10.

insensibility. The natural evils [a] of life he treated as evils; and a violent death by lingering torture as the greatest natural evil.

He foresaw that some of his disciples would madly court persecution. But he gave no sanction to such enthusiasm by his own conduct. He had before taught them to use [b] prudence in avoiding persecution; and he now taught them to pray against it with perseverance and earnestness, but at the same time with the most entire resignation. And this is true constancy in a christian martyr, if he first fervently prays against sufferings which every man must abhor, and then firmly undergoes them, if it is God's will not to avert them from him. It was fit that our Lord's example in this respect should be openly proposed to the world; and undoubtedly every sober and [c] pious christian, of the greatest constitu-

a With a view to the evils which are thick sown in life, or, perhaps, to the persecutions of his followers, he observed, that sufficient unto the day was the *evil* thereof. Matth. vi. 34. He spoke the language of nature, when he called the temporal advantages of riches *good* things; and Lazarus's pain and poverty, *evil* things; Luke xvi. 25; and, again, when he thus foretold Peter's crucifixion, that another should gird him, and carry him whither *he would not*. John xxi. 18.

b Matth. x. 23. c See Luke xviii. 7.

tional fortitude, has publickly or secretly followed it, from the irresistible bent of human nature.

Our Saviour also taught christians in all ages, what the depravity of the world made it necessary for many to bear in mind, that a state of the sharpest sufferings was consistent with the favour of God; and that the most perfect innocence, and the brightest prospect of future glory, could not overcome the natural horrour of them. To prevent despair in any, he made himself a pattern to the *weakest* and *tenderest* of mankind. "He sanctified the passion of fear, and hallowed natural sadnesses, that we might not think the infelicities of our nature and the calamities of our temporal condition to become criminal, so long as they make us not to omit a duty.....He, that fears death, and trembles at the approximation of it, and [illegible] had rather die again than sin once, hath not sinned in his fear: Christ hath hallowed it, and the necessitous condition of his nature is his [a] excuse."

We suppose that our Lord prayed against his death, and not against his dejection of mind: agreeably to his words in another place, where his crucifixion *must* be meant:

[a] Bishop Taylor's Life of Christ, p. 488.

"Shall [b] I not drink of the cup which my Father hath given me?" We do not else see how the apostle's words have due force; where he observes that our Lord prayed to him who was *able to save him from death.* We cannot else understand St. Matthew's words, "O my Father, if this cup may not pass from me, unless I drink it, thy will be done:" which must refer to a future cup of suffering, and not to one which he had already drunk. Nor do the strong expressions used by Christ admit of the other supposition. He could not doubt whether it were [c] *possible* that God could remove from him his discomposure and dismay.

We say then that our Lord prayed against his *death:* "My [d] Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me." "[e] Father, all things are possible with thee: remove this cup from me." "[f] Father, if thou be willing to remove from me this cup, *well.*" However, he immediately added words to this effect: "Nevertheless, not my will, but thine, be done." But how could he pray against an event which he himself and so many prophets had foretold? It has been answered,

b John xviii. 11. c Matth. xxvi. 39, 42. Mark xiv. 35, 36.
d Matth. xxvi. 39.
e Mark xiv. 36. f Luke xxii. 42.

that, notwithstanding predictions, good and evil will influence the mind; and we should perform our duty suitably to our circumstances. Our Lord foretold the fall of Peter, the treachery of Judas, and the destruction of Jerusalem; and yet used the natural means to prevent them. This suggestion is strengthened by observing that many of God's commands and predictions, though expressed absolutely, appear in the history of his providence to have been conditional and revokable. Abraham was commanded to sacrifice his son; and God [a] recalled the command, when he had proved his faith and obedience. David [b] besought God for his child with fasting and tears, after Nathan had foretold his death: for he said, "Who can tell whether God will be gracious unto me, that the child may live?" Jonah was sent to prophesy against the inhabitants of Nineveh, that their city should be overthrown in forty days: and [c] yet God spared them on their humiliation and repentance. God said to Ahab by the prophet Elijah, "[d] Behold, I will bring evil upon thee:" and yet the sentence was remitted in part; for God afterwards declared that, because Ahab humbled himself,

a Gen. xxii. b 2 Sam. xii. c Jon. c. iii.
d 1 Kings xxi. 21, 29.

he would not bring the evil in his days; but in his son's days would he bring the evil on his house. And though, in Hezekiah's sickness, God said to him by Isaiah, "Give [a] charge concerning thy family; for thou shalt die, and not live;" yet, in consequence of his fervent supplication, God healed him on the third day, and added to his life fifteen years.

But why were not the prayers offered up by our Lord effectual, since he said to Peter very soon afterwards, "[b] Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall give me more than twelve legions of angels?" It is answered, Because our Lord prayed with resignation to his Father's will, and not absolutely. "None [c] took his life from him, but he laid it down of himself. He had power to lay it down, and he had power to take it again." He submitted to death from a conviction of its fitness. When his anguish of mind was allayed, and his commotion, natural to man, subsided, his language was, "[d] Shall I not drink the cup which my Father hath given me?" "How [else] shall the scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?" as if this par-

a 2 Kings xx. Here see 1 Sam. xxiii. 12. Jer. xvii. 7, 8. xxxviii. 17.
b Matth. xxvi. 53. c John x. 18.
d Matth. xxvi. 54. Mark xiv. 49.

ticular reason for his death had been recollected by him, or had been [e] recalled to his mind by the angel who [f] appeared to him.

We may now proceed to shew our Lord's composure of mind, after he had thus strongly expressed the perturbation which had been raised in him by his fore-knowledge of the many dark events which awaited him, and particularly by his abhorrence of a violent and excruciating death.

He went [g] forth to meet the traitor, and the officers sent to apprehend him; he [h] discovered himself to them; and when God had struck them with such a miraculous awe that they [i] fell on the ground, and had thus demonstrated Jesus's power of restraining their violence, our Lord made them this wise and benevolent request, "If [k] ye seek me, let these [my attendants] depart." He [l] mildly addressed the perfidious Judas: he was so collected as instantly to perceive the necessity of working a [m] miracle to prevent the ill consequences of Peter's affectionate but rash violence; and he forewarned that apostle, and

e See Mark ix. 12. Luke xviii. 31. Matth. xxvi. 24.
f Luke xxii. 43. g John xviii. 4.
h John xviii. 5. i ver. 6. k ver. 8.
l Matth. xxvi. 50. Luke xxii. 48.
m Luke xxii. 51.

all mankind, that [a] drawing the sword in the cause of his religion would involve the good and bad, the persecuted and persecutor, in undistinguished destruction: he declared his readiness to [b] fulfil the scriptures by his death: he meekly [c] expostulated with the people for their violent and disgraceful manner of apprehending him: while he stood before Caiaphas, he [d] shewed a composed attention to Peter's irresolution and timidity, and penetrated him with a sense of them by the majesty of his eye: at the same time, he [e] replied with the most exemplary self command to the officer who struck him for answering the high priest in a manner full of reason and dignity: before Caiaphas, and the whole council of the chief priests, elders, and scribes, he [f] entered into no vindication of himself, no explanation of his perverted expressions, against the false witnesses suborned to accuse him: but, when adjured by the living God to say whether he was the Christ the Son of the blessed God, he answered, I am; though he knew that they would impute it to him as blasphemy, a

a Matth. xxvi. 54. b ib xxvi. 54.
c ib. 55. d Luke xxii. 61.
e John xviii, 23. f Matth. xxvi. 62.

crime which, by the [g] law of Moses, was punishable with death.

Fortitude under actual sufferings is patience; and submission to them because they are the will of God is resignation.

How did Jesus act, when those who held him spat [h] in his face; when they blind-folded him, and smote him on the face with the palms of their hands, or struck him with their staves; when they derided his prophetick spirit and Messiahship in this taunting language, Prophecy who he is that smote thee? Under all these circumstances of indignity, "he [i] opened not his mouth, like a lamb led to the slaughter."

When he stood before Pilate he astonished him by not seeking to avert death in the usual way of [o] defending himself against the accusations of his enemies: and as before the Jewish high priest and council, he acknowledged himself to be the Christ the Son of God, which had the appearance of blasphemy; so before the Roman governour he confessed that he was a [p] king, though it might be called sedition.

Before [q] Herod he conducted himself with the same majesty, the same patient en-

g Lev. xxiv. 16.
h Matth. xxvi. 67, 68, and parallel places.
i Isai. liii. 7.
o Matth. xxvii. 13, 14.
p John xviii. 37.
q Luke xxiii. 8—11.

durance of wrongs, and the same resolution to decline the means of selfpreservation which became his peculiar circumstances. He refused to gratify the idle curiosity of Tetrarch by working a miracle, and to give that account of his life and ministry which might have been accredited on the authority of others: for which Herod and his soldiers treated him with contempt and scorn, and sent him back to Pilate arrayed in a gorgeous robe, in derision of his claim as a king.

When our Lord was again brought before Pilate, [a] a robber and a murtherer was preferred to him by that very multitude who had heard his divine instructions, and seen, or perhaps experienced, his beneficial power: nor did even this vile indignity extort from the meek Jesus a word of expostulation.

Then Pilate [b] commanded that Jesus should be scourged; after which severe and ignominious punishment the whole band of the Roman soldiers made him their sport, crowned him with thorns, clothed him in purple, delivered him a mock sceptre, paid him mock adoration, addressed him with mock

a Matth. xxvii. 20, and parallel places.
b John xix. 1—3. and parallel places.

titles of royalty, spat on him, and smote him on the head.

The sight of Jesus thus derided and afflicted, did not satiate the fury of his enemies; but after they had afforded him a further opportunity of displaying his dignity, and resolution to meet death, by giving no [c] answer to Pilate's question, "Whence art thou?" they extorted the [d] condemnation of him from his worldly-minded judge by their loud and artful solicitations.

Then was Jesus led away to be crucified: his cross, or part of it, was laid on him, as the manner was; and he bear it till his exhausted strength sunk under it: "and two others also, *who were* [e] malefactors, were led with him to be put to death." On the way, a great multitude of women bewailed and lamented him: but he turned about to them, and, with a heart full of commiseration, bade them deplore their own impending sufferings, and not his; declaring at the same time, but in figurative and covert language, that, if the innocent suffered such calamities, much greater would befal those whose crimes made them ripe for [f]

c John xix. 9.

d We may partly account for Pilate's conduct from his knowledge of Tiberius's extreme jealousy and cruelty.

e So Luke xxiii. 32, should be translated and pointed.

f Luke xxiii. 27—31.

destruction: "If they do these things in the green tree, what shall be done in the dry."

When he came to the place of crucifixion, he was offered wine mingled with myrrh, which was designed to blunt the sense of pain by inducing a state of stupefaction: but he received it not: he declined this office of humanity, that he might shew himself unappalled by the horrours of instant crucifixion; and that he might fully possess his reason, and thus display the virtues suitable to his high character in the season of so severe a trial.

A title, deriding his royal descent and dignity, was placed on the cross to which he was fixed. He was crucified between two malefactors; and, probably while the nails were piercing his hands and feet, when the sense and feeling of his ignominious sufferings were strongest, he thus prayed and pleaded for his murtherers; "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do."[g]

In this situation, which might have excited the pity of the most unfeeling spectator, and of the bitterest enemy, our Lord was reviled and mocked, his power was questioned, his prophecies perverted, and his dignity blasphemed, by the Jewish people, by the Roman

[g] Luke xxiii. 34.

soldiers, and by the chief priests, scribes, and elders; the rulers mixing themselves with the throng, to feast their eyes with his sufferings and to insult him under them.

But such conduct served only to display the greatness of the sufferer. The patience of Jesus remained unmoved. Here, as when he stood before his judges, he left his life and doctrine, his prophecies and miracles, the supernatural knowledge displayed by him, and the voices from heaven which bare him witness, to speak for him a stronger language than words could convey. As an ancient writer [h] observes, his silence under all the indignities and reproaches which he met with, shewed more fortitude and patience than any thing said by the Greeks under their sufferings.

And again, when one of the malefactors reproached him, he answered him not: but when the other [i] said, "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom," he thus acknowledged himself to be a king, and one who had the [k] keys of heaven and hell, "Verily I say unto thee, To-day thou shalt be with me in paradise;" in the state of those who are separated, as in a garden of delight, for God's acceptance.

h Origen, L. 7. §. 54, &c. i Luke xxiii. 42. k Rev. i. 18.

It is a remarkable instance of our Lord's composure, that, in the midst of his exquisite pains, he recommended his mother to that most benevolent apostle St. John.

The next circumstance in the order of events is, that about the ninth hour our Lord cried with a loud voice, "My [k] God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" As the words in the original [a] psalm do not import a dereliction of the Deity, they cannot be thus understood when used by our Lord. In this strong language the Psalmist described imminent distress, and danger from the sword of scornful and mighty enemies. He did not mean that he was totally forsaken by Jehovah, whom he afterwards entreated not to be far from him, whom he called his strength, whom he characterised as not hiding his face from the afflicted, and to whom he promised praise and thanksgiving in return for the mercies which he implored. In the same terms our Lord expressed the greatness of his anguish; when, in the prophetick words of the psalm, which is sometimes applicable to David and sometimes to the Messiah, "he was poured out like water, his bones were separated from

k Matth xxvii. 46. a Psalm xxii.

each other, his heart was like wax, it was melted within him." Our Lord's language, was dictated by extreme sufferings, and not by distrust. In the style of the [b] Hebrew scriptures, when God permitted individuals or nations to be oppressed and afflicted, he was said to hide his face from them, to forget, reject, or forsake them. Jesus could not suppose that God had cast him off, because immediately before and after these words he reposed an entire confidence in him. During his crucifixion he twice called God his [c] Father, he declared his assurance that he should enter into a [d] state of happiness, and accordingly he resigned his departing [e] spirit into his Father's hands. He likewise saw, during the space of three hours before he expired, that God miraculously interposed in his behalf, by diminishing the light of the sun and shedding a comparative darkness over the whole land, or, at least, that part of it which was adjacent to Jerusalem. When Jesus had thus poured forth his sorrows, in the words of a sacred hymn which expressed many circumstances of his death, God, who had, as it were, hidden his [f] face from him for a moment, had

b See Job xx. 19. Pſal. xxxvii. 25. xxxviii. 10, 21, 22, &c.
c Luke xxiii. 34, 46. d Ib. ver. 43. e ver. 46.
f Iſai. liv. 7, 8.

mercy on him with everlasting kindness, and speedily closed the scene of his sufferings. For, immediately after this, "[g] Jesus, knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst." This thirst was the natural consequence of his pains, and of that effusion of blood which was occasioned by piercing his hands and his feet. But, unless it had remained that the prophecy of the Psalmist should receive its [h] full completion, it was a circumstance on which he would have observed a majestick silence: such was his command over himself, and so attentive was he that not one jot or tittle of the prophets should pass away. "Now there was set a vessel full of vinegar;" the mean drink of the Roman soldiers; and one of the bystanders filled a spunge with vinegar, and placed it upon a bunch of hyssop, and by means of a reed advanced it to his mouth. "[a] When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished:" the prophecies concerning me, antecedently to my death, have had their accomplishment: I have finished my laborious and painful course: I have thus far performed thy will,

g John xix. 28. h See Psalm lxix. 21. Matth. xxvii. 34.
i John xix. 29, and parallel places. a ib. ver. 30.

O God. Immediately after this, he expired with words expressive of a perfect reliance on God, and a firm persuasion of his acceptance: "[b] Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit."

Thus did our Lord appear as great in his sufferings as in his actions, in his death as in his life; and thus did he exhibit a wonderful example of forgiveness and composure, of magnanimity and conscious dignity, of filial love and pious resignation, in the midst of the most horrid tortures that human nature is capable of sustaining.

[b] Luke xxiii. 46.

SECT. X.

Of our Lord's Veracity.

MOST justly did our Lord say of himself that "he [a] told the Jews *the truth* which he had heard from God;" and that, "because he told them [b] *the truth*," however contradictory to their prejudices, "they did not believe him." He paid a constant regard to the virtue of veracity; it was a prevailing principle with him, and a constituent part of his character: and therefore, when he had fearlessly acknowledged his regal dignity to Pilate, he added, "For this cause was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness to the [c] *truth*:" that in fit circumstances I should acknowledge my high office, and should preach and confirm the religion which I am sent to found, whatever danger I may incur by such a conduct.

Suitably to this character, Jesus plainly reproved the [e] faults of his friends and enemies; warned the [f] rich of their extreme danger; foretold the persecutions of his church in all ages; taught that taking up the [g] cross

a John viii. 40. b verse 45. c John xviii. 37.
e Matth. xvi. 23. c. xxiii. f Mark x. 24. &c.
g Luke xiv. 25—33.

was the consequence of becoming his disciple in the earliest age of the church; and proclaimed, not to a few but to multitudes which followed him, that, before they became his disciples in those days of fierce opposition to the gospel, they must count the cost, and forsake all that they had.

In like manner, when James and John, full of worldly ideas, preferred their ambitious request, that in our Lord's kingdom one might sit on his right hand and the other on his left, the reply was an open and upright one: "To[b] sit on my right hand and on my left is not mine to give; but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of my Father." And when our Lord was asked by four of the apostles at what time the destruction of the temple should happen, he premised a particular and destructive prophecy, explained the preceding signs of the events foretold, and assured them that many who were then living should see the accomplishment of his predictions. This might have sufficed; and, no doubt, would have appeared satisfactory: but the admirable rectitude and simplicity of his mind led him to add, that the spirit of pro-

[b] Matth. xx. 23.

phecy afforded not an useless gratification to overcurious men by exactly specifying this awful period: "Of [i] that day and [k] season none knoweth; neither the angels who are in heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only."

Nothing can more strongly illustrate our Lord's ingenuousness and sincerity in his intercourse with his disciples, than those striking words, "In [l] my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you." My Father's heavenly residence may be compared to a glorious and spacious palace: it is indeed infinite in extent as well as glory: if it had been incapable of admitting you, I would have plainly told you so, as my manner is; I would not have fed you with vain expectations.

In regulating the common discourse of christians our Lord's precept is, "Swear not at all:...but let [m] your communication be Yea, Yea; Nay, Nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil." Common swearing leads to perjury, and is highly irreverent towards God. Every mode of vehement asseveration, in the usual intercourse of men with each other, proceeds from mutual

i Compounded of Matth. xxiv. 36, Mark xiii. 32.
k Compare Matth. xxiv. 42. Mark xiii. 33.
l John xiv. 2. m Matth. v. 37.

distrust: but plain affirmation and denial argue a sacred and habitual attention to truth.

When our Lord commissioned the twelve apostles to preach the gospel, this was part of his instructions: "[a] Behold I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and simple as doves." He recommended to them a prudent simplicity and sincerity: and taught that the mind of a christian must have no foreign and base *mixture* of cunning, hypocrisy, or falsehood.

There are some parts of our Lord's conduct, connected with the present subject, which have been usefully discussed by critics and moralists.

After Jesus had cleansed the temple at the first passover, the Jews said, "[b] What sign shewest thou unto us, since thou doest these things? Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." His hearers understood this literally: but our Lord alluded to the temple of his body; and probably intimated his true meaning by the action of pointing to himself. Here the words would be explained by the event: and their intended obscurity subjected

a Matth. x. 16. b John ii. 18, 19.

them to examination, and impressed them on the memory. Veracity and every virtue must be governed by prudence. A plain reference to his death, and speedy resurrection, would have been unwise and dangerous before malignant hearers. Had he directly asserted to them, as he afterwards did to his disciples, that he should be put to death, and be raised again on the third day, we have reason to think that he must instantly have preserved his life by miracle.

Our Lord's reasons for using parables might be given at large, if room permitted. They covertly expressed truths which it was not wise to deliver directly and publickly; or which could be more forcibly delivered under that form. And in private our Lord was open and explicit, as his nature led him to be; "and [a] explained every thing to his disciples."

To this mode of instruction, and to the strong figures which often occur in the scripture, the observation of moral writers is applicable; that nothing is advanced which is designed to mislead, and which differs from the intention of the speaker. They are subject to known laws of interpretation, according to

[a] Mark iv. 34.

which they are true; and we should always recollect that the easterns delighted in the parabolical and figurative style.

When the Jews insidiously asked Jesus by what [a] authority he acted, and who gave him that authority, they were pursuing their intention of [b] destroying him. But he, being determined to fulfil the law by suffering on the day of the paschal solemnity, baffled their immediate design with admirable wisdom, by asking them a question relative to the baptism of John, which they durst not answer. Upon which Jesus said to them, "Neither do I tell you by what authority I do these things." He had repeatedly assured them of his divine commission; that he [c] spake as his Father taught him; that he [d] proceeded forth and came from God; that the Father had [e] sanctified him, and sent him into the world. But for weighty reasons he suppressed a like declaration at that time. And an occasional concealment of the truth, justified by prudence, is very different from a transgression of it.

Upon the whole, there was no [f] guile in our Lord's words or actions. There is no vice more frequently condemned by him than

a Mark xi. 28. b ib. ver. 18.
c John viii. 28. d ib. 42. e ib. x. 36.
f 1 Pet. ii. 22.

hypocrisy, by which the outward appearance of men *belies* their inward sentiments; and he observed of the evil spirit that, when he spake a [a] lie, he spake of his own; for he was a liar, and the father, or first forger, of this abject and hateful crime; the introducer of evil and falsehood into God's creation, which before was all goodness and truth.

SECT. XI.

Of our Lord's Natural Affection.

THE ends of society and the good of mankind require that, in the nearest human relations, nature should strongly incite to the performance of beneficent offices. St. Paul condemns the heathens for being [b] without natural affection; which particularly appeared in the cruel practice of exposing their children: and, in prophetically describing the corrupt ages of christianity, he represents men as [c] disobedient to parents, and without natural affection. On each of these occasions it is observable that he enumerates the blackest crimes which disgrace human nature.

a John viii. 44.

b Rom. i. 31.

c 2 Tim. iii. 2, 3.

The amiable and useful principle of natural affection is supposed in many parts of our Lord's discourses: "If a [d] son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone?" To "leave [e] brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, for his sake and the gospel's," Christ pronounced to be greatly rewardable in this life and the next; though we see, by the restraining clause, that he required this desertion of them only when higher duties would else be violated. He also foretold, as a wonderful and horrid effect of religious hatred, that in times of persecution "the [f] brother should deliver up the brother to death, and the father the child; and that the children should rise up against their parents, and cause them to be put to death."

When he is exposing the conduct of the Jews, who made void many of God's commandments by their traditions, he selects, as an example, the [g] fifth commandment; thus evincing what stress he laid upon the duty of children to their parents.

In this respect, let us observe the conduct of our Saviour. The gospels record one cir-

d Luke xi. 11, &c. e Mark x. 29.
f Matth. x. 21, 22. and parallel places.
g Matth. xv. 4, 5, 6.

cumstance only in his behaviour during his childhood, [a] his accompanying his parents to the passover, and remaining behind, when they returned. After finding him in the temple, his mother said unto him, Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing? He replied, "How is it that ye sought me? knew ye not that I must needs be in my Father's house?" The wonders and the prophetick declarations at his birth, might have led his parents to conclude that he was sent into the world for great religious purposes, and his early piety and wisdom might have confirmed them in this conclusion. The reply made by him on this occasion intimated circumstances in his character, which made his case a peculiar one. After this, Jesus went down to Nazareth with his parents, and was [b] subject unto them. It has been generally thought that he set an example of industry and humility, by working with his hands at his father's occupation.[c]

When, at the marriage in Cana of Galilee, the mother of Jesus addressed him in a manner which seemed to imply a request that he

a Luke ii. 49. b Luke ii. 61.
c Mark vi. 3.

would now begin the exercise of his miraculous power,[d] his answer is remarkable, "Woman, what have I to do with thee? mine hour is not yet come." That the appellation was a respectful and honourable one, none can doubt, who observes that our Lord used the same form of address on the cross, "Woman, behold thy son;" and that in ancient writers, persons of rank are frequently thus addressed by their equals or inferiours. The remaining words contain a mild admonition, for which a reason is assigned, "Why dost thou interfere in my conduct as a prophet?" But having given this gentle reproof, he suffered her request to sway him, and made the first display of his glorious power partly in deference to her.

While he remained in the house at Capernaum, where he had cast out a demon, and his mother and brethren came to him, and could not approach him, because of the multitude; he observed to those, who informed him of the circumstance, "Who is my mother, and who are my brethren? Whosoever shall do the will of my Father, who is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother." By this conduct and remark, he

[d] John ii. 12, &c.

did not mean to express any want of regard to the ties of nature, but to show his value of that relationship which was founded on love and obedience to God. When one, whom he called to be his immediate follower, that is, to become a preacher of the gospel, said to him, "Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my Father," Jesus answered, "Let the spiritually [a] dead, thy kinsfolk, perform this office: do thou go and preach the kingdom of God," as I now call thee. Let the superiour duty take place of the subordinate.

Another disciple, called to a strict personal attendance, wished to employ some time in bidding farewell to those of his house. Jesus answered, [b] No man, who has engaged in the ministry, as thou hast, and again desires to pursue his secular concerns, is a fit instrument for propagating my gospel. The present season requires that my followers should detach themselves from worldly and domestick objects, if they aim at perfection.

Though our Lord was a prophet, mighty in word and deed, he was not ashamed of his mean kinsfolk at Nazareth; and though his fellow citizens rejected him, and even com-

a Luke ix. 59, 60, &c. b Luke 61, 62, &c.

pelled him to preserve his life by miracle, yet he a second time attempted their conversion.

The last act of natural affection in Jesus' life is the most striking. While he hung on the cross, his mother, in company with some other women, stood near it, and fulfilled Simeon's prophecy, that a sword should pierce through her soul. At this time, when his injunction would be most deeply impressed, he evinced his filial piety, by saying to the disciple whom he loved, for his peculiar sweetness and benignity of disposition, "Behold thy mother; one, whom thou art to treat with the same honour and tenderness, as if she really stood in that relation to thee." If the Son of God behaved in this submissive and affectionate manner to his earthly parents, it becomes us to imitate this lovely and engaging part of his example; and by our respectful assiduities, and blameless and dutiful lives, to consult the ease, the comfort, and happiness of those who are allied to us by this tender and sacred tie.

SECT. XII.

Our Saviour's Friendship, Conduct to those in Authority, and Prudence.

In such a disposition as our Saviour exhibited, we may naturally expect to find a readiness to approve and love the amiable and excellent qualities of others. One, in whom there was so much sensibility and affection, could not but be susceptible of *friendship*. It has been objected that he has not placed friendship in the number of duties. But there are many passages in which a love of preference is mentioned as common among mankind; and as lawful; [a] and it is expressly declared, that friendship had a place in our Lord's breast, where every thing resided that was truly laudable and good. When our Saviour says, "Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you;" and when he is represented as loving Lazarus [b] and St. John, in these passages, if not in some others, the idea rises above that of an "acquaintance, or kinsman, or relative, of the same family, fortune, or sect." Friendship indeed is a connexion which many may not be able

a Luke xi. 5, 6. xxi 16. John xv. 13. b John xi. 3, 5, &c.

to form, and therefore cannot be enjoined as a general duty. But it is certain, that no soil is so well prepared for "that peculiar relation, which is formed by a consent and harmony of minds, by mutual esteem and reciprocal tenderness and affection," as the heart in which christian virtues flourish.

It would be instructive to view our Lord not only in his domestick and private connexions, but as a *member of civil society*, and as a part of a great community, together with his other countrymen, the Jews.

There we may observe that he did not exceed the limits of his commission as a prophet and religious teacher. He refused to interfere as a judge between brothers, disputing about an inheritance, whilst, as his proper province required, he at the same time delivered precepts against covetousness and against anxiety in worldly matters. Though he would not condemn the adultress judicially, which would have been involving himself in civil affairs, he directly condemned her as a divine teacher, "Go, and *sin* no more."

With regard to the religious instructers of the Jews, though as a prophet he freely reproved those who were unworthy of that character, yet he enforced the proper kind of re-

spect due even to such: "The scribes and pharisees sit in Moses' chair. All things therefore whatsoever they command you to observe [meaning such things as were agreeable to the law of Moses], those things observe and do."

He manifested his love to his country by dispensing almost all his instructions and miracles to the Jews, and by warning his own nation of impending dangers. He frequently addressed his countrymen in the most affectionate and pathetick manner,[a] and when from the surrounding hills he beheld the once favoured city of Jerusalem, and in spirit foresaw her desolation, he lamented and wept over her with great emotion.[b] His love for his country most eminently appeared in his dying for it. He died for the Jewish nation,[c] and not for that nation only, but for all the true sons of God, wherever dispersed throughout the world.

The great and singular assemblage of virtues, in the character of Jesus Christ, was ever guided by consummate *prudence*; which presided over his conduct, and gave a peculiar aptness and force to his words and actions.

a Luke xiii. 34. b Luke xix. 41.
c John xi. 51, 52.

Would our limits permit, we might cite a multitude of instances in his life illustrating his practical wisdom.

Such are some of the excellencies of Christ's moral character. He sets an example of the most perfect piety to God, and the most extensive benevolence and the most tender compassion to men. He does not merely exhibit a life of strict justice, but of overflowing benignity. His temperance has not the dark shades of austerity; his meekness does not degenerate into apathy. His humility is signal amidst a splendour of qualities, more than human. His fortitude is eminent and exemplary in enduring the most formidable external evils, and the sharpest actual sufferings: his patience is invincible; his resignation entire and absolute. Truth and sincerity shine throughout his whole conduct. Though of heavenly descent, he shows obedience and affection to his earthly parents. He approves, loves, and attaches himself to the amiable qualities in the human race. He respects authority religious and civil; and he evidences his regard for his country by promoting its most essential good in a painful ministry dedicated to its service, by deploring its calamities, and by laying down his life for its benefit. Every

one of his eminent virtues is regulated by consummate prudence; and he both wins the love of his friends, and extorts the approbation and wonder of his enemies.

Let the character of our Lord and Redeemer be ever placed before our eyes. His virtues form a brightness, which fitly represents the glory of that God, who inhabiteth light inaccessible. Truly this was the Son of God, the Saviour of the world. Being our instructor and deliverer, he is also our example. Christians are predestinated to be conformed to his image. In vain are any called by his name, if they aim not to possess his spirit, and walk in his steps.

God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! Open our eyes and give us power to behold thy glory in thy blessed son. Give us grace to express his image by all the parts of a holy life; to conform our wills and affections to his pure precepts; to submit our understandings to his perfect lessons; and to imitate his benevolence to men, his obedience to God, his zeal tempered with meekness and patience, heightened with charity;—that we may grow up with the increase of God, till we come to the full measure of the stature of Christ in

the state of purity and joy. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto his God and Father, be blessing and honour and glory and dominion and power forever and ever, Amen.

END OF VOL. I.

NOTES.

(1) Jortin's Sermon on Resignation, vol. 4.

(3) Dr. H. Hunter's History of Jesus Christ.

(4) Bp. Taylor's Life of Christ.

(5) Bp. Taylor's Life of Christ, p. III.

(6) Ap. Tillotson's Sermons on the example of Christ.